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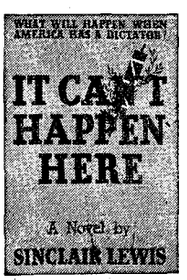

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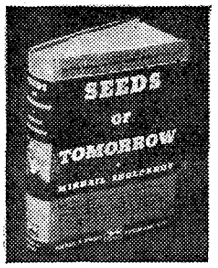

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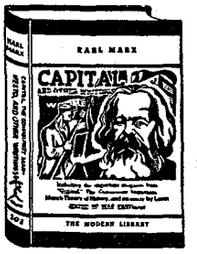

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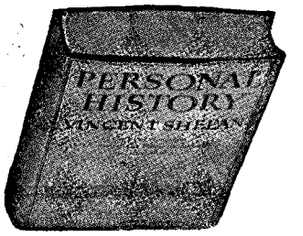

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New Masses

MARCH 24, 1936

Hunger Behind Bayonets

A REPORT just issued by the United States Department of Commerce shows that behind the boasts and the threats of the German fascists lies a nation in the grip of economic catastrophe. Three years of Hitlerism have brought the people a hunger and misery that break through even the abstraction of statistics.

The Department of Commerce reports that during December, 1935 and January, 1936, the decline in Germany's industrial employment was even greater than last winter. Registered unemployment increased by 522,000 in the month of December alone. At the same time the number of employed persons *decreased* by almost 1,000,000. From December to January the number of officially admitted unemployed increased from 2,507,000 to 2,520,000.

Germany's food shortage continued through the two months covered by the report. Butter was scarce again in January and eggs were hardly obtainable during the greater part of the month.

Although 1935 closed with a favorable trade balance, Nazi Germany's balance of foreign payments was not improved. On the contrary, it showed signs of greater strain and further deterioration. The Reichsbank's gold reserves declined in December by 5,677,000 marks; and in January there was a further decline of 5,856,000 marks which went to pay for imports of foodstuffs indispensible to starving Germany.

There can be no doubt that the internal economic catastrophe is one of the reasons why the Nazis are preparing so frantically for war.

DIE LORELEI

Russell T. Limbach

"Cushioning" Taxes

WHATEVER minor qualms Wall Street may have had about the President's proposal to raise an additional $620,000,000 through taxation are in the process of being put to rest. The House Ways and Means sub-committee, charged with working the proposals into legislative form, has accepted a modification urged upon it by the spokesmen for the big corporations. The principle adopted is aptly termed "cushioning" the corporations. The undivided profits tax would be graduated so that a portion of these profits would largely be spared from taxation.

Even in its original form, the President's proposal was not too objectionable to the big corporations. He did not ask that a single penny be taken from the mass of undivided profits which have accumulated to date—an estimated total approaching fifty billion dollars. The indications are that in passing through the Congressional mill, the plan will come out so well "cushioned" and loop-holed that it may even meet the approval of Al Smith. The passivity of administration leaders to date toward pressure from the Right on the taxation issue bears out this expectation. This would not be the first of the President's "radical" tax plans to turn out a dud.

For the masses of common people there is a very alarming element in the proposed taxation. There is every likelihood that more processing taxes will be railroaded through Congress. The President called for processing taxes on a series of agricultural products hitherto untaxed. In addition, a levy has been proposed to make up for taxes lost through the invalidation of the A.A.A. These new taxes would extend still further the burden of indirect taxation borne almost entirely by poor consumers. Under the New Deal there

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has been a marked movement of taxation in this direction. Whereas, in 1932, indirect forms of taxation accounted for 47 percent of the national revenue total, in 1935 this proportion had risen to 71 percent.

Meanwhile, the most reactionary representatives of finance capital grouped around the Liberty League and the Republican Party are utilizing the discussions on taxation for deceptive "economy" propaganda. Actually their crusade is directed against government expeditures for unemployment relief and all other forms of social benefits.

At present little is heard in Congress about a peoples' taxation program, which would shift taxes to those who can best afford to pay them. Little is likely to be heard until a Farmer-Labor Party, speaking for the interests of the majority of the people, becomes a reality.

Al Capone Talks

IT IS heartening that Al Capone, even though temporarily removed from the strain and turmoil of everyday life, still watches events from his hide-away cell on Alcatrez Island. Al Capone (like Al Smith) says:

> Bolshevism is knocking at our gates. We can't afford to let it in. We have got to organize ourselves against it and put our shoulders together and hold fast.
>
> We must keep the worker away from Red literature and Red abuses. We must see that his mind remains healthy.

The Living Newspaper

WHEN a man is thrown out of a Broadway theater by the police for booing a character portraying Earl Browder, Communist leader, that's news, even if it's not quite the millenium. It actually happened last Saturday evening at the Biltmore Theater and was only one of the strange angles of the setting in which the Living Newspaper project of the Federal W.P.A. Theater was born.

Harassed at every turn by flannel-mouthed reactionaries, with vigilante elements within their ranks and something less than official encouragement from old-line leaders of Actors Equity, the first produced edition of the Living Newspaper project, *Triple A Plowed Under,* startled thinking New York. Sponsored by the Newspaper Guild, the project met official censorship when its first production, *Ethiopia,* was banned by W.P.A. big-wigs on the score that it might lead to "international complications." Saturday night's invitation performance, which brought an enthusiastic audience, a handful of disruptive reactionaries and thirty policemen under the command of a sorely puzzled captain, was actually the birth-night of what is clearly not only a new, popular, effective dramatic form but something which may be raised to the status of a national political issue.

Amazing as are the twenty-two spectacular scenes describing the impoverishment of the American farmer since the war, the production itself threatens to be lost in the maelstrom of furious debate over it. The reactionaries in and out of the Federal Theater project are shouting that it is "communistic" and that its supervisor, Morris Watson, vice- president of the American Newspaper Guild, is a "Communist." Liberty Leaguers and other stout Wall Street gentlemen are already ringing the changes on the Stalin to Tugwell to Roosevelt (to Morris Watson?) theme.

Victor Ridder, local W.P.A. administrator, meanwhile must take responsibility for the disruptive actions of the so-called Veterans Federal Theater League, a small, red-baiting group. It was Ridder who, by his attacks on the unions of W.P.A. workers, stimulated the development of the fascist forces within the projects.

Progressive-minded New Yorkers will give reactionaries the best answer by unstinting support to the Living Newspaper. At the top prices of 55 cents, *Triple A Plowed Under* is hardly something that can be missed. A jammed house every night of its two weeks' run should settle once and for all the question: Does America want an uncensored, government-supported theater?

Mr. Hearst's Elliot

ELLIOT ROOSEVELT, the President's son, has become vice-president of Hearst Radio, Inc., an operating company for stations owned by William Randolph Hearst. This is a new step in the alliance of the Roosevelt scion with America's No. 1 Fascist. Since last September, Elliot has been vice-president and sales-promotion manager of the Southwest Broadcasting Company, two of whose stations have been bought by Hearst.

According to the New York Times, President Roosevelt has refused to comment on his son's activities. But there will be plenty of comment in American homes where many imagine that the President is a bulwark against fascist propaganda.

Bambrick Calls It Off

THE strike of Building Service Employes in New York City came to an abrupt end when President James J. Bambrick signed a three-year agreement with the Realty Advisory Board. The militant strike was broken, despite the enthusiastic, active cooperation of the rank and file and the support of tenants and middle-class groups. Bambrick did not consult the workers before making a settlement, though the rank and file must return to their jobs under an agreement that is certainly no victory for them.

How did Bambrick come to sign this agreement which did not even guarantee an increase in wages, improvement of working conditions or the reinstatement of all strikers? Why did he fail to obtain union or preferential shop? The picket lines held solid; other unions aided the strike by boycotting buildings manned by scabs; the strike was orderly and effective; it was aided by rent strikes and by the insistence of those most affected by the strike—the middle-class tenants—that landlords sign an immediate settlement granting the workers' full demands. The strike was not lost on the picket line. Negotiations behind closed doors killed the sure success that the strike promised—and Bambrick was in at the killing.

Last week THE NEW MASSES naturally gave full support to the strike. The article we published pointed out:

> The strike is by no means won. . . . Bambrick has already offered to arbitrate —to arbitrate all demands, even the closed shop. . . . If the closed shop is refused, union men can be discriminated against, militants can be squeezed out of jobs. Clearly, protection must be granted to union men before wages and hours can be arbitrated. . . .
>
> Bambrick did not use the best judgment in offering to sign a contract which outlawed strikes.... Furthermore, the Building Service Employes lacks rank-and-file control of the union so important in building a strong organization. The rank and file must work under the new contract; the men should have the right to approve it or turn it down. As it is now, Bambrick has absolute power. With the referendum, the danger of a contract which outlaws strikes, which does not guarantee closed shop, is to a large de-

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> gree obviated. Democracy in a trade union must be granted if the organization is to increase in strength, consolidate its gains.

Since those lines were written, President Bambrick continued to act in a bureaucratic manner as if the strike were his personal property to settle or not to settle. He had obtained in the first enthusiasm of the strike the full right to sign for the strikers without submitting the final terms to a referendum of the entire membership. He looked to the enemies of labor for aid and encouragement, relying on the international officers of the union, A.F. of L. bureaucrats who run their own locals in Chicago not on a trade-union basis but as money-making rackets. He turned to Mayor LaGuardia who from the first did his utmost to defeat the strike. With full knowledge of the implications, Bambrick accepted the LaGuardia-appointed arbitration board—an "impartial" panel composed of men with the same financial interests as the landlords. *There were no representatives of labor on this board.* This was a criminal omission. The arbitrator of reinstatement disputes is a real-estate man and architect. The arbitrators of the wage award will be appointed by the strike-breaking Mayor LaGuardia.

With the strike officially ended—at least for the time being—the rank and file faces three tasks. It must beware of discrimination by employers against fellow unionists whom the Realty Board falsely accuses of "violence" and "sabotage" (read "militancy" and "advocacy of trade unionism"). Already, Bambrick says, there have been "thousands of violations." He adds:

> It is quite evident that the Realty Advisory Board signed the agreement in bad faith, with no intention of living up to it.

But Bambrick also signed this agreement which in no way provided for protection of union members from such violation. The rank and file has answered by picketing buildings discriminating against strikers.

Union members must also beware of delay by the arbitration board in handing down a wage award. Such a delay, the usual trick of employers who influence "impartial" arbitration boards, has as its purpose the withholding of substantial wage increases. Bambrick's agreement sets no time limit on the deliberations of the arbitrators; the terms he signed encourages employers to press for the lowest possible award.

Finally, most important for the future of the Building Service Employes and the lesson this strike holds for other workers and their middle-class allies, the rank and file must demand and obtain the right to run its own union. The rank and file, for its own protection and as a weapon against officials such as Bambrick who lose sight of the needs of the union membership when confronted with LaGuardias and McGradys and Realty Advisory Boards, must gain the right to have the final say about its own destiny.

A New Strike Wave

THE walkouts of recent weeks may herald a renewed strike wave of major scope. A successful general strike in Pekin, Illinois, was followed on Feb. 17 by the strike action of 16,000 Akron rubber workers. Strikers already under way were augmented by the stoppage of 4,000 ladies garment workers in Boston, 1,500 flat glass workers in Toledo, Ohio, 900 workers of the Columbia Chemical Co. in Barberton, Ohio, as well as dozens of smaller strikes affecting thousands in widely scattered communities and varied occupations. New York's 75,000 building service workers have given the movement impulse.

The tendency among trade unionists to appeal to the general strike has been a distinct feature of late. Although general strikes have not materialized since the Pekin victory, sentiment in this direction developed with startling rapidity both in Akron and New York.

Factors underlying these developments may be gathered from the current survey of business conditions prepared by the American Federation of Labor. In its summary of industrial development since the end of the N.R.A., the report discloses some the conclusions contained in t "Robert Report," suppressed by Sec tary of Commerce Roper. Pointing the fact that 120 large corporations creased their profits by an average 141 percent during the latter half 1935, the A.F. of L. survey states tha "average wage rates were reduced b one cent per hour between July and De cember, 1935; hours of work were lengthened so that the average work week was three hours longer in December than in July, and by this increase more than one million jobs were denied to the unemployed."

Thus, with profits rising, workers' wage rates are cut though the cost of living continues on the increase. With production expanding, exploitation is intensified through increased speed-up and lengthened working hours. The labor movement can check these trends. Recent strike activity constitutes a good beginning. The organization of the unorganized workers into industrial unions in the major industries becomes more pressing an issue than ever before.

New Masses

VOL. XVIII, No. 13 CONTENTS MARCH 24, 1936

Editorial Comment..... 3
An Historic Opportunity..... 6
Can Britain Keep Peace?...John Strachey 9
Smash the Sedition Bills
Seymour Waldman 10
God and the Gorillas.....Dale Kramer 12
They Killed My Son....Harrison George 15
Chain Gangs in Palestine.....Ellis Sax 17
Our Readers' Forum..... 20
Review and Comment
MacLeish and the Critics
Isidor Schneider 21
Round the Elephant and Back Again
Jack Conroy 22
The Novel That Came Too Late
Louis Ferris 23
Duranty and the U.S.S.R...Paul Novick 24
Art
.Walter Quirt..Charmion Von Wiegand 25
The Theater
Hirsch Lekert....Nathaniel Buchwald 26
The Screen.....Kenneth Fearing 27
Between Ourselves 28
Drawings by
Russell T. Limbach, William Gropper, Scott Johnson, Serrano, Mackey, reproduction of paintings by Walter Quirt and Eitaro Ishigaki.

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178

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An Historic Opportunity

Toward a Nationwide Farmer-Labor Party

THE development of the presidential election campaign has brought into the open the reactionary forces which have been organizing to destroy the remaining liberties of the people. It is a sinister fact that many candidates for the Republican nomination are more or less frankly allied with the Liberty League, and that Hearst plays a leading role in the maneuvers for the nominations in the anti-Roosevelt camp. The Landons, Knoxes and Borahs supply the demagogy, Wall Street collects the funds, Hearst furnishes the program.

On the other hand, there are encouraging signs that many people are waking up to the colossal danger which threatens them at every point of their existence. Recently two county Farmer-Labor Party conventions at Minneapolis unanimously voted for the formation of a national Farmer-Labor Party. They passed resolutions demanding that the state Farmer-Labor convention which will meet March 27 take the lead in organizing such a nationwide party. Four new local Farmer-Labor parties, organized in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and South Dakota, have also gone on record for a national Farmer-Labor Party; and they, too, have called upon Minnesota to take the initiative.

There are already a number of local movements for a Farmer-Labor Party in various states. These are waiting to be consolidated into a national organization representing not only workers and farmers, but also their natural allies today, the expropriated sections of the middle class. The fact is, the crisis has so reduced the economic level of small businessmen, professionals and white-collar employes that they have a direct interest in the formation and growth of a Farmer Labor Party.

Some group must take the initiative in convoking a national conference for that purpose. It seems to us that the state convention which will gather in Minnesota on March 27 is in an ideal position to take the first step. Now is the time to take it. Not since the Civil War has America faced so critical a turn in its history. The entire social structure has been shaken to its foundations by an economic crisis unprecedented in our history. The major aspects of the prevailing catastrophe have been stated again and again, until there is danger that the very act of repetition may dull the vigilance of the people. Yet the facts cannot be too often repeated, for day in and day out life itself ruthlessly imposes them upon us. Twelve to fifteen million Americans are out of work; more than 16,000,000 people are on a starvation relief dole; the wages of those who are employed are being cut; the farmers have been forced into bankruptcy; the small business-men and the professionals have been driven to the wall; half of our people already exist below the poverty line.

There is not a man or woman reading these lines who does not know from his or her own bitter experience what the effects of the economic crisis are. In his nationwide radio broadcast, Earl Browder uttered the thought of millions when he said that *the main issue of 1936 is how to put America back to work.* No doubt exists for the mass of the American people on this point. The main question which now confronts the country is the *specific method* for solving the crisis. Reality imposes upon us a great choice which cannot be evaded. *Who* can put America back to work, and by *what means?* This is a burning problem which affects at once the unemployed worker, the bankrupt farmer, and the middle class which has felt the scourge both of unemployment and of bankruptcy.

Who will put America back to work? It is becoming clear to an increasing number of people that neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties will do anything to lift the crushing burdens from the people. True, Big Business is divided in its policies. The most reactionary elements of the governing class, the Liberty Leaguers and the Hearsts favor an immediate fascist drive against the fundamental rights and interests of the masses of America. The Roosevelt administration, while not ready to introduce fascism, is no guarantee against it. The President's concessions on the taxation program, his passivity toward the "sedition" bills, his failure to solve the unemployment problem, the threat to the W.P.A., the rapid preparations for war—these and similar policies make it obvious that the Roosevelt regime speaks fundamentally for monopoly capital and yields to its pressure.

It makes no difference at bottom whether the government in Washington is Republican or Democratic. Ultimate power rests with the big bankers and manufacturers. That is why Democrats and Republicans of all factions are united in their efforts to obscure the issues of unemployment and bankruptcy. That is why party lines by now fictitious are ignored when it comes to voting huge war appropriations or passing "sedition" laws designed to crush the labor movement and the progressive activities of middle-class people opposed to the growing reaction in this country. The essence of the crisis lies in the prevalence throughout America of unemployment and hunger, the spread of political reaction and fascism, the danger of a war far more terrible than the last. And in this crisis both of the old parties are fundamentally committed to monopoly capital. They will do everything in their considerable power to advance the interests of the big bankers and big manufacturers at our expense, at the expense of the vast majority of the American people.

This leaves us no real alternative. Unless we are prepared to accept some form of fascism, unless we are willing to see our economic situation grow progressively worse and ourselves deprived of the most elementary civil rights, we must break away from the rule of Wall Street.

It has already been pointed out and will be pointed out again and again, that a Farmer-Labor Party would not require that we all agree on a complete program for reconstructing society. It would pledge itself only to carry out those few simple measures upon which millions of people are already agreed. 1. Whenever a capitalist closed down his factories and threw out his workers, the Farmer-Labor Party in power would be pledged to reopen those factories and put the employes back to work at union wages. 2. A Farmer-

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DESIGN FOR A COURTHOUSE MURAL *William Gropper*

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r government would outlaw the
w dog contract and company
as. 3. It would help the workers
farmers to make our industries and
ulture 100 percent unionized. 4. It
d tax the rich to care for the poor.
t would enact genuine old-age, un-
loyment and social insurance legis-
n that would really give social se-
y to all those who could not yet
ut back to work—legislation along
lines of the Frazier-Lundeen bill
before Congress. 6. It would
y guarantee the equal rights of the
roes who are now stirring with re-
against their shameful treatment.
t would provide for the millions of
h in the city and on the farm at
t their minimum needs by enacting
Youth Act worked out by the
erican Youth Congress. 8. It would
the rising tide of reaction in the
ntry. 9. It would handle the Su-
preme Court as Lincoln did and dras-
tically remove its usurped dictatorial
powers. 10. It would make it impos-
sible for the Morgans and the Hearsts
to drag us into another imperialist
war; it would join with all the peace
forces in the world to restrain the Ger-
man, Japanese and Italian warmon-
gers; it would keep America out of the
war by helping to keep war out of the
world.

These measures are not revolution-
ary; but they would organize the
masses of the American people against
the intolerable domination of Wall
Street. A nationwide Farmer-Labor
Party, representing the people, would
relieve the population from its most
immediate, most desperate burdens.

It would fight against high prices,
high rents, high utility rates; and for
a reduction on debt charges. Its pro-
gram would touch those vital matters
which are as important to the middle
class as to the industrial laborers and
the impoverished farmers. It would
fight for the fullest freedom of speech,
press and assemblage, for the right to
organize—for the maintenance and ex-
tension of every civil right which en-
ables workers, farmers and middle-
class people to defend their interests
against their common oppressor, Big
Business.

The backbone of a nation-wide
Farmer-Labor Party would, of course,
be the trade unions. Its growth would
gain immeasurably from a united front
between the Socialists and the Com-
munists. But middle-class people and
professionals have every reason for
participating actively in the formation
and development of a Farmer-Labor
Party. Like the workers and the farm-
ers of this country, the school teachers
and the white-collar employes, the doc-
tors and the newspapermen, the law-
yers and the small businessmen have
felt the lash of unemployment and eco-
nomic degradation. They, too, have
been the objects of fascist attacks. And
in the past two years many of them
have shown courage and vision by or-
ganizing and striking for their rights.

The middle class logically belongs
in a nation-wide Farmer-Labor Party.
It has been the mainstay of earlier
third-party movements in this country.
The Progressive Party of 1912 and
the La Follette movement of 1924
both based themselves on the middle
classes which in this country, more than
anywhere else, are acutely aware of the
sinister power of the trusts. For
decades the small American business-
man has revolted against Big Business
and the professional, either as muck-
raker or active reformer, has battled
against the power of monopoly capital.
If these revolts have hitherto been fu-
tile, it is because even progressive sec-
tions of the middle class have had illu-
sions about the status quo. They
thought they could obtain concessions
and basic reforms from Big Business,
or fell into the naive belief that they
could defend their interests by isolated,
independent action.

Recent events here and abroad should have taught them that only by an alliance with the workers and farmers, only by a political partnership with the mass of the laboring population can the middle class make any headway against the power of Big Business, against the disastrous decay of the national economy, against the growth of fascism, against the danger of war.

Many middle-class people share with
workers and farmers the realization
that a nation-wide Farmer-Labor Party
is the only possible answer to the acute
crisis in which America finds itself. It
now remains for some group with the
necessary prestige and authority to take
the iniative in the formation of this
people's front.

Such a step would immediately serve
to clarify the political atmosphere. For
there are those who favor a Farmer-
Labor Party in principle, but feel that
its formation should be postponed to
1938. They argue that a third party
would deprive Roosevelt of votes and
would bring to power the far more re-
actionary forces opposed to him. But
this attitude is based on illusion. To
begin with, the present arrogance of
the Republicans is based on the fact
that Roosevelt has lost a certain
amount of prestige with the masses. He
has not kept his promises to the For-
gotten Man. And those who are dis-
satisfied will turn to the Republicans
*unless there is a nation-wide Farmer-
Labor Party expressing their needs and
aspirations*. Furthermore, in the ab-
sence of a genuine Farmer-Labor
Party, there is the danger that a
pseudo-third party may be organized
to draw away those who are disillu-
sioned with the New Deal; and this
fake third party will be under the
thumb of the Republicans. The absence
of a Farmer-Labor Party would defi-
nitely strengthen the extreme reaction.
No greater calamity could befall this
country; for the tories are determined
to crush every possibility which the
producers may have of defending their
rights.

There is a genuine difference in
tactics between Roosevelt and the
tories of his own class; but what guar-
antee is there that if he is re-elected
he will respond to the needs of the
people? The present administration
has been marked by one concession
after another to the extreme right—
and this even in the election year of
1936. After the elections, Roosevelt
may very easily repeat Wilson's evolu-
tion from the New Freedom to the
Palmer raids.

Although a Farmer-Labor may not
win the presidency this year, millions
of votes for such a party would be a
major effective blow against the grow-
ing reaction. Only such a party can
unite all sections of the people for
whom it is absolutely necessary to fight
against economic disaster, against fas-
cism, against war. France has already
given us an example of what a power-
ful people's front can do even when it
does not control the government.

The time to strike is while the iron
is hot. The most logical year for the
organization of a nation-wide Farmer-
Labor Party is 1936. The Farmer-
Labor Party of Minnesota has the
necessary prestige and authority to
take the initiative in issuing a call for
a nation-wide conference that will
launch the party for which the times
are ripe and the people ready. Will
the delegates who meet in Minneapolis
take it? They have a great historic
opportunity.

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Can Britain Keep Peace?

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, March 1.

ARMAMENTS dominate the political situation. It is now clear that the British government has made up its mind to arm the empire on quite a new scale and in a new way.

Naturally, its cries that Britain is at present disarmed are nonsensical. It has a fleet about ten times as strong as that of any European nation and second to none in the world. And the air correspondents are informing us that one squadron per week is being added to the air force.

But despite all this the present armaments look like a boy scout's stave compared with what the government is proposing.

It is proposing to spend no less than £300,000,000 on new armaments. It is proposing, in other words, that this country should arm on the new post-war, fascist scale—the scale on which Germany and Italy are armed.

The essential question which the British Labor movement must ask is this: What is the purpose of these armaments? We are told by Mr. Baldwin and other government spokesmen that their purpose is to enable us to play our part in a League system of collective security. But that is not true.

Our present degree of armaments is probably adequate, when joined as it nominally is (under the terms of the Covenant—Article 16) with the armaments of France, the Soviet Union and the other League states, to resist any possible fascist aggression. The terrible truth is that the vast new armaments which the British government is demanding are to be used, not for strengthening the League, but precisely for freeing Britain from the need for cooperation with the League Powers.

They are designed to enable the ruling clique within the government to undertake any kind of adventurous, war-like and aggressive foreign policy, probably in support of the next piece of fascist aggression, which may well be directed against the Soviet Union.

The diplomatic correspondent of The London Observer let the cat out of the bag in a recent message:

"For fifteen years," he wrote, "European diplomacy has worked on the hypothesis that Great Britain was disarmed and depended for security upon the League of Nations.

"The new armament program will constitute," he writes, "the biggest landmark in European history since 1918."

It is designed, in other words, to free Britain from the necessity of cooperating with the peaceful League Powers.

The truth is that a bitter and evenly-balanced struggle is going on between one section of the governing class (led, it is becoming more and more clear, by Mr. Baldwin himself) which proposes a more or less disguised but effective support for fascist Germany and another section (headed within the government by Mr. Eden and outside it by Sir Austen Chamberlain) which wishes, for the time being at any rate, to curb Germany.

I have no doubt that the British Labor movement, if it will act, is fully strong enough to tip the balance between these two contending factions within the governing class and to tip it down upon the side of peace.

It is vitally necessary that the working-class movement of this country should throw its whole weight behind the policy of support for peace and the League and uncompromising resistance to fascist aggression. In doing so it will have to fight the new super-armament program. Indeed it is becoming more and more clear with every day that passes that the struggle of the Labor movement of this country for peace and the League must become a struggle against Stanley Baldwin. The British governing class, faced by manifold perils, is desperately anxious for what they call national unity. They have the effrontery to ask the Labor movement to consent to unity with the man who ridiculed collective security eighteen months ago, won an election by pretending to support it and then went back upon his word by supporting the infamous Hoare-Laval Pact.

Today Baldwin is a profoundly discredited man. He has been half-revealed for what he has become—the leader of the pro-fascist forces of this country. It is of the utmost importance that the leaders of the Labor Party should make it clear that the British people will never grant a vast expenditure on armaments to such a government as this, headed by such a man as this. For we know that they would be used, not to preserve peace and to support the League, but to support Hitler and to attack the Workers' Republic of the Soviet Union.

Recently a full-dress debate upon these great issues was staged in the House of Commons.

That debate should have told us where the government proposed to throw the weight of this country; did it propose to preserve peace by backing the League, imposing oil sanctions and showing Germany that we stood solidly behind France and Russia, or did it still intend to pursue the criminal adventure of saving Mussolini and encouraging Hitler to make war?

But all the debate has told us was that on this terrific issue the British government has not made up its mind. It has not done so for two reasons: first, because it is itself profoundly split and second, because the pro-fascist forces grouped around the Prime Minister, which are probably still dominant within the government itself, dare not openly flout the will of every decent man and woman in this country.

Mr. Atlee, the leader of the Labor opposition, correctly said that the one definite statement which the government had made was that it was still undecided. If the British Labor Party will make the most of this unparalleled weakness and division within the government ranks, they can ensure the fall of Baldwin and his administration and the assumption of office by a government which will back the League and stop the fascist war.

The same diplomatic correspondent of The London Observer whom I have just quoted made some almost ludicrously frank advance references to this debate:

> Up to the second week of last December [he wrote] the British Government still in the main depended for its security upon the collective system prescribed in the Covenant of the League of Nations. In theory—and Mr. Eden is expected again to subscribe to the theory in his speech tomorrow—the government still maintains its belief in the effectiveness of the Geneva system. In practice it has by contrast put into operation the alternative principle that Britain's defence can be reliably secured only by the British Army, Navy and Air Force.
>
> The embarrassment into which the government is placed by the dual role of maintaining one theory in principle and practising another will be illustrated by the nature of tomorrow's opposition.

Here then is a government which, even in the opinion of its own warmest supporters, is maintaining one theory in principle and practising another, which is, in a word, determined to dupe and deceive the country into supporting the fascist war.

But the government is very much isolated. Even within the Tory Party there is a clear majority for the imposition of oil sanctions. The truth is that world events are steadily making the pro-fascist line of the Baldwin group more and more obviously the policy not only of criminals but of lunatics. Events are slowly strengthening the pro-peace forces in the world; first there is the certainty of the early ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact. Once that pact is ratified the idea of what the pro-fascist speakers in the debate in the House of Commons called "defending Western civilization," which means making an alliance of France, Britain and Germany for an attack on the Soviet Union, will have received a heavy blow.

Second, the growth of the People's Front all over Western Europe, its triumph in

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Spain and its steadily gathering strength in France, give a world picture which would be distinctly favorable if it were not for the continued determination of the ruling clique in this country to succor the hard-pressed Italian and German fascists.

Once again let it be emphasized and re-emphasized that the Baldwin government in Britain is Hitler's and Mussolini's last hope and refuge. If the working-class movement in Britain can destroy this government, it will perform an historic service for the working class of the whole world.

Nor must anyone suppose that this is an impossible or even, if our forces are united and determined, a difficult task. Immediately after the recent elections, when this government returned to office in apparent triumph, it may have seemed to be idle to speak of its early destruction. But today events move with lightning rapidity. Already the present British government has been weakened to an almost unbelievable extent, its Foreign Secretary driven with ignominy from office and its Prime Minister become one of the most discredited men in Europe.

Every week now in the House of Commons important speakers from the government benches get up and speak of the Prime Minister in a way unparalleled in recent English political history. Sir Austen Chamberlain's recent attack was evidently only the beginning of a determined revolt of a section of the Conservative Party against the Baldwin leadership.

Conservative speakers are now coming out openly for oil sanctions, for an out-and-out support of the League of Nations and a sympathetic attitude to France and the Franco-Soviet pact. Sooner rather than later there must be a showdown between them and the group within the Cabinet which stands for a diametrically opposite policy.

In this situation, where there is a fundamental division on the government side of the House, a determined and united opposition can play a decisive part. The British Labor movement has a great responsibility.

Smash the Sedition Bills

SEYMOUR WALDMAN

You who read these lines face the immediate danger that your most elementary civil rights will be abrogated. You have heard of the Tydings-McCormack bill which makes it a crime to criticize militarism; you have also heard of the Russell-Kramer bill which, under the guise of legislating against Communism, will prevent you from expressing any opinion distasteful to the fascists of this country. The object of these bills is to smash the American labor movement and to crush all popular opposition to another bankers' war. The danger is imminent because the tories are doing everything in their power to rush these bills through the present Congress. President Roosevelt is doing nothing to halt these measures. Certain A.F. of L. bureaucrats frankly told the Washington correspondent of the THE NEW MASSES *that they are ready to see the Russell-Kramer bill go through. Are you ready to learn from the bitter experience of the post-war days, from the catastrophes which have befallen the people of Germany and Italy? Only the most determined action by the American people can save them from this fascist assault on their civil rights. Send your protests at once against the Tydings-McCormack bill and the Russell-Kramer bill. Send them to us and we will forward them for you to Washington. Act, before it is too late.*—THE EDITORS.

WASHINGTON.

REACTIONARIES in the House of Representatives are making dangerous headway in obtaining preferential treatment for the Tydings-McCormack military disobedience bill and the Russell-Kramer sedition bill. The Chamber of Commerce considers these measures essential to its anti-labor campaign; there is imminent danger that in the present Congressional set-up these two measures, crushing fundamental civil rights, may be rushed through.

Just how critical the situation is was indicated to me by Representative Emanuel Celler, Democrat of Brooklyn, who wrote the House Judiciary Committee's minority report on the Russell-Kramer bill.

"There are a lot of fascists in the House," Celler said, "who are doing their utmost to get the Russell-Kramer and Tydings-McCormack bills through the House. These fascists are joining forces with those entrenched in power. They will leave no stone unturned to accomplish their ends."

The Tydings-McCormack bill was drawn up by President Roosevelt's Navy Department. It represents the viewpoint of the professional patrioteers and the military clique. The bill seeks to stop all criticism of military expenditures and to punish workers who appeal to the National Guard not to shoot strikers. It provides a two-year prison term for anyone who dissents from the efforts of Big Business to merge the military and industrial machines of this country.

Initiated by Charles Kramer, Los Angeles Democrat, on behalf of Hearst and the Industrial Association of the Pacific Coast, the Russel-Kramer bill provides a five-year prison term for anyone who advocates the revolutionary overthrow of the government. It is analogous to California's criminal-syndicalism act, under which people are imprisoned for exercising their civil rights. Reactionary courts, controlled by Big Business, interpret such laws so that any disagreement with the tories becomes advocacy to "overthrow the government."

These two dangerous bills will most likely become law unless immediate action is started against them. Many progressives have been taken off their guard by recent developments. It is true that Senator Tydings no longer sponsors the measure bearing his name. It is also true that Senator La Follette gave notice two weeks ago that he would introduce a motion to recall from the House of Representatives the Tydings-McCormack bill, which was jammed through the Senate last session. This does not mean, however, that Senate approval of the bill has been revoked. It is still officially approved by the Senate. Senator La Follette's delay in putting his motion to recall the bill from the House gives that much more time to the reactionaries to push the measure through the House.

On March 9, I asked Senator La Follette when he planned to ask for the recall of the Tydings-McCormack bill from the House.

"It will depend on the legislative situation," he replied. "Probably this week."

But every day's delay brings the bill that much nearer to enactment. Similarly, the Russell-Kramer bill is being pushed by the reactionaries without evoking sufficient popular opposition. In the House, half-a-dozen congressmen have knocked the bill off the unanimous-consent calendar. These congressmen will probably be able to muster the requisite three objections for knocking the Tydings-McCormack bill off the calendar the next time it comes up. This has led many people to depend upon a handful of liberal congressmen to stop the assault on civil rights. But Representatives Marcantonio, Scott, Maverick and others frankly admit that in the face of concentrated Chamber of Commerce pressure no group in Congress is strong enough to prevent the passage of the two Hearstian measures.

A powerful, nationwide movement in defense of civil rights has to make it clear to the members of the House and the Senate that the fascist bills must not be passed. Otherwise, the Rules Committee will grant

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special consideration to the bills. They will be brought up on the floor for debate and they will have an excellent chance of passing.

Every parliamentary trick is being employed to push the bills through. In regard to the Russell-Kramer bill, Senator Russell, Georgia Democrat, told me that the Senate Judiciary subcommittee considering his bill might dispense with hearings. Instead, it will submit to the Senate Judiciary Committee the extensive report of the House Committee —which recommended passage of the bill!

"Do you know," I asked him, "that the United Mine Workers and other trade unions and the American Civil Liberties Union and many other liberal groups are opposed to your bill?"

"I didn't know that," Senator Russell said. "But, in my opinion, it doesn't make any difference."

The closely-knit reactionary forces behind the two bills will make every effort to capitalize on the confusion of the closing days of Congress to shoot their bills through. The minority report on the Tydings-McCormack bill, signed by Representatives Kvale and Maverick, said: "A brash piece of Hitleristic fascism . . . an intended suppression of our Bill of Rights." And Congressman Celler's minority report on the Russell-Kramer bill explained why "those who are entrenched in power" want the bill. This measure, Celler pointed out,

> would subject the great majority of the American people, particularly the workmen, to the absolute domination of a small minority of powerful and vested interests. . . . The owner of a plant . . . could use the statute for his own fell, selfish purposes. Where he controls local officials, he could claim that strikers at his plant were guilty of sedition and were aiming at the overthrow of Government, whereas in reality higher wages and shorter hours were their goal. Subservient and complacent district attorneys and sheriffs would readily prosecute. . . . There is . . . set up a sort of Fascist concept of law."

At the recent convention of the United Mine Workers, President John L. Lewis, Vice-President Murray and Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Kennedy—Lieutenant-Governor of Pennsylvania—submitted a joint report on the two bills, condemning them as a threat to free speech and as direct aid to employer terrorism. The trade unions officials made a concession to the open-shop Red-baiters by lumping together fascism and Communism. Nevertheless, they vigorously protested against the Tydings-McCormack and the Russell-Kramer bills, as "designed to terrorize free speech and a free press under pretense of suppressing sedition." "These measures," they added, "belong to that category of sedition laws that stifle free speech, breed spies, establish the terrorism incident to uncertainty and are the resort of those who regard strikes and industrial revolts as themselves a phase of treason."

I asked Congressman Celler what he thought ought to be done immediately to defeat the Russell-Kramer sedition bill and the Tydings-McCormack bill.

"The great necessity," he replied, "is for all the trade unions and liberal organizations and their press to wage a sustained fight against these bills. And, by the way, what is the American Federation of Labor doing? I can't understand their silence in the present situation. During the war, the ones who felt the scourge of this type of bill were the laboring men. The minute the laboring man organized for better working conditions or for higher wages, he was accused of striking at the government. It was argued that he was guilty of sedition and he was jailed."

Senator King, Democrat of Utah, chairman of the subcommittee on the Russell-Kramer bill, "really couldn't say" whether the bill will come out this session, "but," he added, "as to the Bolsheviks in America, I'm for deporting all of them."

The A.F. of L. is deliberately refraining from doing anything on the bills. A responsible A.F. of L. official in Washington stressed this point.

"What are you doing about the bills?"

"Nothing. The Tydings-McCormack bill is dead. Senator Tydings has withdrawn his sponsorship."

"Nevertheless, the bill stands approved by the Senate."

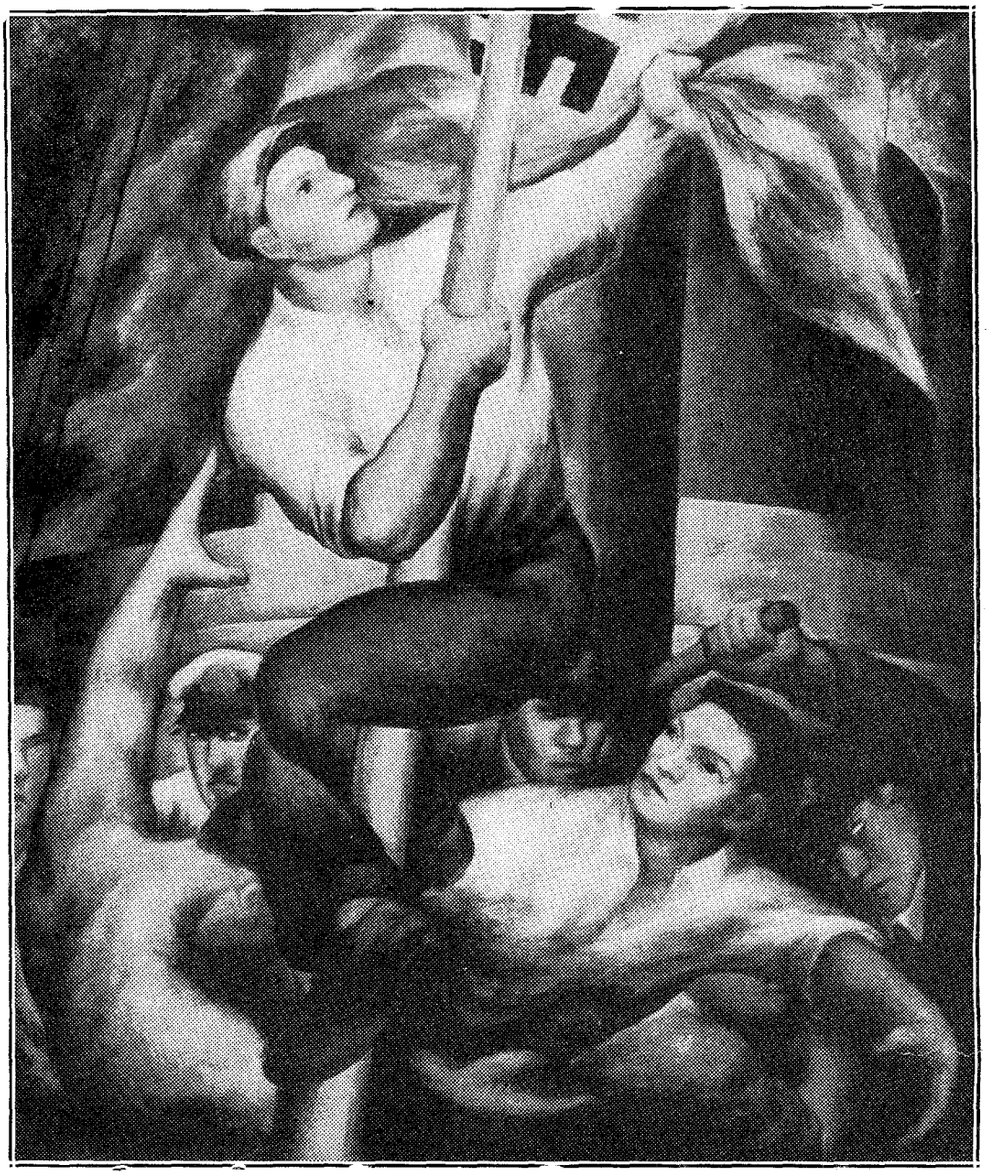
"Well, we agree with the purpose of the bills, but we are afraid it will be twisted."

"Then you agree that the bills are aimed mainly against the trade unions?" I asked.

"No. We think that the purpose of the bills, hitting the Communists, is honest and those behind the bills are honest."

Another A.F. of L. spokesman put it this way: "What are we going to do? Nothing."

The two fascist bills are directly connected with war preparations. They aim to suppress anti-war sentiment before hostilities begin by silencing all who do not share the views and purposes of the tories. Only the most determined effort by workers, farmers, liberals, professionals and other middle-class groups can stop the present Congress from suppressing our civil rights. No senator or representative can afford to ignore letters and telegrams from his constituents.



"DOWN WITH THE SWASTIKA" *Eitaro Ishigaki (On exhibition this week at the A.C.A. Gallery)*

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God and the Gorillas

DALE KRAMER

ARTHUR BRISBANE, now 73 years old, is going along much the same as ever. Geese will say *too* much the same, but wiser men will consider the forests used in the printing of his columns, the barrels of ink spread upon the paper, the type set, and remember that all this has given employment.

Besides, there is reason to believe that in its helter-skelter this thoughtless generation has failed to digest the philosophy and teachings of the Highest Paid Editorial Writer in the World. Dr. Brisbane comes rather scattered out, of course, and as far as I can discover has never bothered to collect himself into a book. Probably hasn't time for it; certainly not now with a war on his hands, England butting in and only Mussolini and Father Coughlin to lend support. But there should be some place that bright-eyed journalism students can go for quick nourishment, something they can get in large, nutritious bites. And so, without a particularly prominent chin to stick out and having had all oratorical aspirations deflated by an expert on such things, I have endeavored to lend the philosopher aid by straining the soup and dishing up the meat.

The subject matter of Dr. Brisbane's writings can be divided into, roughly speaking, nine categories, namely: (1) Airplanes and how to use them, (2) Life, (3) Mussolini, (4) the Labor Unions are Running Things, (5) Economics, (6) Lynchings, Hangings, Electrocutions and Head Choppings, (7) the Hereafter, (8) Science and (9) Gorillas. These headings are broad, but I feel the choice morsels below will convince the reader of their fitness.

Airplanes and How to Use Them. Dr. Brisbane's view of the importance of the flying machine may be gathered from the amount of space he allots it. In fact, it is no secret that he considers many of his opinions and statements of such importance as to bear repeating. For instance, he has recalled to our minds no less than half-a-dozen times recently that when Lord Northcliffe offered a prize of $50,000 to the first flier spanning the English channel the task was considered so impossible that Lloyd's insured the offer for almost nothing. You can find a moral there. Yet it is true, unfortunately, that certain Boy Scout statesmen in Washington do not appreciate the importance of airplanes, particularly those of the bombing variety, a state of affairs of which Mr. Brisbane recently took cognizance when he spoke dolefully of "millions for unemployed, none for airplanes."

Even England knows how to better order things, having recently spent seven billions on "warships, airplanes and other useful things." Mussolini, of course, is the boy who really knows airplanes, and consequently there is no stopping him, as Dr. Brisbane has pointed out. The correctness of this view may readily be seen from the revelation that one squadron of airplanes can destroy any European city in a very short time. Later—and despite the possibility of severe reproof for the disclosure of military secrets — Dr. Brisbane informs the world that London, Paris and New York are undefended against airplane attacks. It is true that we often hear patter of anti-aircraft guns halting air attacks and even of sending attack planes aloft to fight invaders, but our instructor has shown the ineffectiveness of such things where a real aviation expert is concerned. He simply ignores them. Yet war, despite the present dark picture, may become a thing of the past if only the world will stop its foolishness and give heed to Dr. Brisbane's remarkable peace plan. His proposal, announcement of which electrified the world on April 4, 1934, is simple in theory, as all great things are, and absolutely sure of success. Under it nations in disagreement would, instead of going to war, compete in Easter egg rolling contests.

Life. It is in the realm of Life itself that the depth and worthiness of the philosopher's thought becomes most apparent. While it is impossible to put Dr. Brisbane's views on the complex subject into one short paragraph, a few key notes can be struck. Probably the most ringing of all is the incisive statement that "man is a wonderful creature," a premise running throughout his entire work. But man has his blemishes, dark spots upon which our teacher mercilessly throws the white light of his thought. There are the nudists. Remembering that "one of the symptoms of insane people is a stripping off of the clothes," Dr. Brisbane must hesitate to vouch for the sanity of these people. And, worst of all, we find this business of going without clothes will result in the human body becoming again covered with short red hair (see Science). Consequently it is no surprise that our mentor must reject even half-way toleration of the "idiot nudists." "The Kentucky legislature, which passed a law making it a crime for nudists to cavort except behind high walls, was informed that its action would not protect heaven from offense." Pink toenails and the beauty patch have also aroused the splendid indignation of our master. But there are more optimistic moods when "men can do whatever they imagine and many things more," civilization is better than starvation and "nothing is as beautiful or as encouraging as the faces of happy school children." Dance marathons are disgraceful, but when we compare them with burning people alive they do not seem so bad. Too, lest we become discouraged, we are told in Dr. Brisbane's own inimitable words that "there are always better days ahead."

And so it is that in the main his themes are calm, thoughtful and direct. We lack space for further exposition, but let us list for the reader's later contemplation a few aphorisms: "Everything has two sides." To illustrate this, Dr. Brisbane takes the case of a dog's ears. If you clip them, it hurts him; yet if you don't, some other dog may bite them. So there you are. Dorothy Dix's stand that "big, strong, silent men are rather useless" is endorsed. "The best occupation is thinking, but it is the most painful." "Never give up." "You need not pity a man who has lost his money if he still has his family." "Crime does not pay." "There is absolutely no time in which to begin anything worth while or to do better except now." "If you do your best, and have the stuff, the world will acknowledge your work." "What would we think if a herd of buffalo put a man into a pasture to fatten and eat, as we do the buffalo?" "Life is a kaleidoscope."

Mussolini. "Men believe that they think for themselves, but like wolves, what they want is a leader of the pack." With this thought Dr. Brisbane has prepared us for his proclamation that Mussolini not only is a "constructive dictator" but the "champion dictator of all time." He "knows how to get things done," looks well in a stove-pipe hat and it is impossible to talk compromise to a man like that. He builds his power on patriotism and trains children for war, a program which our mentor compares to the suckling of Romulus and Remus by the she-wolf. In fact, Dr. Brisbane feels so strongly about Mussolini's fascism that he wants 1,000 U.S. school teachers to visit "that wonderful country." We know, of course, that the roar of Mussolini's planes over Africa has stirred our master's fighting blood and brought into full play his military ability. And to Mussolini's greater glory it can be said that on the whole he has conducted the campaign in a manner satisfactory to Dr. Brisbane, although it is true that once or twice our instructor has found it necessary to administer sharp dressings down to the boy with the big jaw. But usually the fascist dictator is top notch. He shouldn't be grudged expansion, and will get it. Dr. Brisbane has said so from the first,

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Scott Johnston

and repeatedly told Haile Selassie as much.

One of his first paragraphs on the Ethiopia-Italy dispute said Mussolini will get an indemnity because he is "that way." A little later Selassie was advised to come across with some cash, as well as salute the Italian flag, because "as a practical business man, Mussolini always demands a little soothing cash." In fact, he has had to treat Haile a little roughly, not so much because he is mad at him—though he deals harshly with the little ruler's claim of descendency from Solomon—but because he is such a foolish fellow not to evacuate in favor of a *real* ruler. But such harsh words are infrequent and usually our teacher contents himself with a pleasant bit of bomb dropping, gas spraying and the like of that. Dr. Brisbane grants there is suffering among the Italian masses, but offers solace to Italian mothers by pointing out that meatless days, now that experiments have indicated starvation makes for intelligence, are really a good thing.

The Labor Unions Are Running Things. We have seen that few matters can stir the philosopher's wrath, but it might as well be stated right here that when it comes to the place where labor unions are taking advantage of the whole people he is for the people every time. Dr. Brisbane is tired of the "dual government" which the working people use to exploit the employers and he wants something done about it. For instance, he warns union labor to watch out, else we shall have to come to something like Italy where "there are no labor unions collecting millions a year in dues. Former leaders are working with pick and shovel, a tractor or lathe, according to their mechanical ability." We have been told earlier that Mussolini would never stand for such shameful carryings on as strikes. For a while, it is true, he had some faith in Gen. Hoo Hoo Johnson, the N.R.A. administrator. When the coal code went into effect he hoped Johnson would make it work, for "of all industries, coal has been more seriously disturbed by strikes." But he recognized that unions might cause trouble by asserting a right to "overrule codes." In fact, on Oct. 12, 1933, it appeared to him that the Blue Eagle "may have to veto labor." But the N.R.A. was never very dependable, and instead of shattering the "invisible government" of labor unions it actually was used by these exploiters against the exploited, as when it attacked Henry Ford. Yet Mr. Ford valiantly whipped them off, and it may be noted here—I am sure it will not turn his head—that Dr. Brisbane courageously stood by the persecuted auto maker through the thick of it. And it is all so useless in the "world's richest country with the courts to settle quarrels and unlimited power residing in the government," as well as "tanks of the U.S. army, strong enough to plow through brick walls," which are always to hand. The latter suggestion was made as San Francisco union labor struck "not at employers, but at the public." And so it is that "some rule [no strikes] will have to come." Dr. Brisbane informs us that workers are really "like horses and need a master to care for them."

We are also given an insight into subversive movements. A solution to the Communist problem has also been found—or at least the way pointed. After much research Dr. Brisbane has been able to show that "attractive girls not elected to sororities become communists." It appears that an investigation by W. R. Hearst of the Pi Phis, Tri Delts and Kappa Gammas would not be amiss.

Economics. While many an economist has succeeded in setting up a school of thought, Dr. Brisbane can boast *two* schools. They are: (1) The government should take a hand in our economic life, and (2) the government should *not* take a hand in our

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economic life. It is well to pursue these two lines of thought separately. In the first we learn that "if anything is to be done, it must be done by one man with the right idea and the power to make others accept it." And, again, "it is time to make things happen instead of letting things shape themselves." In 1933 he said: "The government will presumably find a way to convince all citizens that when Uncle Sam takes charge all other management ceases to operate. Unless it does this, the N.R.A. will not get far." Once he told us enthusiastically how Josephus Daniels made a torpedo manufacturer come down four-fifths on his prices by threatening to take over his plant. On the other hand, "the best plan at present is to let every man get as much as his ability makes possible (he cannot take it to heaven), obliging him to use it legally, and exhorting him to use it generously." This country still believes in corner lots. "Industry only asks the administration to observe neutrality in the fight with foreign industry for control of world markets." "The U.S. is no longer a democracy."

But do not fool yourself by believing that Dr. Brisbane is sitting idly by amidst this "New Deal" regimentation. Not for a minute. He has a plan. A little story has been told by our instructor which, if taken to heart, will solve the whole thing. It appears there was once upon a time a tribe of American Indians whom a religious group conquered and attempted to "regiment." The Indians fought back by refusing to have children and died out. There is a lesson in that.

In 1933 he suggested that the army be deployed in a search for gold, but a foolish government paid no heed. The Mellons got their fortunes from "productive, constructive work." In putting Mrs. Sanger in her place, Dr. Brisbane points out that this country needs 50,000,000 more population to purchase second-hand automobiles. Science should not now disrupt a prosperous advertising business by discovery of an easy cure for pyorrhea. Russia is a fascist country and its "rulers" are likely to become multi-billionaires. "Don't kill initiative." Texas could feed the entire world. Reds and anarchists are having a fine time drinking beer on easy money from the rich, but "what will happen when the money runs out?"

Lynchings, Hangings, Electrocutions and Head Choppings. While Dr. Brisbane's discourses on these subjects are not altogether original, his tremendous influence must be considered a chief factor in actions which result from them. Let us take as an example the double lynching in California which brought so much fame to the late Gov. Rolph. Immediately after the men were taken into custody Dr. Brisbane contented himself with a quotation, but his admirers can not doubt that it had much effect on events immediately following. "The late dowager empress of China," he reported ec-

statically, "believed in that theory [of prompt justice] and is supposed to have given the order: Execute the criminal at once, and see that he has a fair trial afterwards." However, our teacher is not in favor of promiscuous lynchings, as shown by his statement after the men had been hung naked to a tree. "One violation of law thoughtlessly approved may lead to others 1,000 times more dangerous, and should be remembered even when a lynching happens to please us."

Few, if any, executions escape him. Head choppings are favorites, particularly if done by hand. As he says, "a head chopped off by hand impresses us." Take this example. "The Hitler headsman, after striking the blow, leaves the ax buried in the block, pressing against the woman's neck for a few moments, pressing the great blood vessels for a few moments, making the beheading less bloody and unpleasant." Thus I think we may safely term our master a connoisseur of head chopping, as we can not help noting a great difference in appreciation between the above and a simple machine job, as "Van der Lubbe climbed silently to the guillotine platform. Goebbels pressed the button, Van der Lubbe's head was in a basket, half full of sawdust." I have been briefer than I should have liked, for it would be impossible to over-estimate the importance our teacher attaches to these occasions.

The Hereafter. While to the superficial observer it may appear that Dr. Brisbane is hesitant in his conclusions concerning the Hereafter, it is well to remember the difficulty involved in securing first-hand knowledge of the subject. However, he has been able to make a few positive announcements, such as that all murderers go to hell, that death-bed repentances are sometimes accepted, and that once a man gets to heaven he will be an equal of Socrates. But on the whole our instructor is less definite, usually concerning himself with thoughtful, stimulating questions. Once, in a period of doubt, he came to the conclusion that man has no such sure hope of eternity as a dog made into a rug. Yet he is aware that heaven and hell make government easier, and that is something.

One of his most searching questions deals with the departure of the soul from the body. "When the heart stops and the body 'dies'," he asks, "does the soul start on its long journey, and then come back in case of sudden recovery, or does it wait a definite time before leaving to make sure?" You wonder about that. And you speculate with him whether Coolidge and Edison, gone to a better place, hear Coolidge's recorded voice broadcast by Mr. Hearst's radio station. Then we stop to ponder upon this: "Is there any moment of wondering while you are on your way, and doubting and hoping, as in this life? There in the grave you lie and your possessions have dwindled down to one small coffin and the clothes that the undertaker has put on you." And we wonder if the "graduates of our electric chair arrive as we send them out, with scars of electricity burning on their heads and faces." You merely ponder and can not for sure say "yes" or "no." But we learn that, at any rate, heaven must be a pretty classy place. For instance, "you could hardly imagine an angel named Tommy Smith."

Science. Probably our instructor's most original and far-reaching pronouncement in this field is what I have called his theory of the Unchangeability in Stature of the Human Being. Simplified, this is an explanation of why the average height and size of men and women remains about the same. This remarkable hypothesis was announced on March 5, 1933, when in speaking of midgets, Dr. Brisbane said: "These interesting creatures, big and little, remind circus goers of the goodness of providence that keeps human beings of the same normal size, making tall, thin men marry short, fat women and the other way around." However, we cannot be too sure that this state of affairs will continue. Short, fat women may become stubborn and repulse the advances of tall, thin men, or something, for our teacher has told us that "in days to come husbands three feet high may seem to women of that time like strange giants." And there is another worry. "Will women remain big in size to reproduce the race and men dwindle until they represent the 'parasite crab'?" Dr. Brisbane asks. "When you capture a parasite crab in deep sea weater it always is a female. You will find her husband under one of her flippers, where she keeps and nourishes him." Which may or may not please us. But the eminent scientist's most renowned investigations have been those concerned with the heavenly bodies. For instance, he has constantly and brilliantly set forth his belief that the sun, moon and stars are a great distance from the earth, a view never successfully disputed. And in the investigation of light years he is what might be termed, in the vernacular, a "daisy." I think one example will convince the reader. "Three hundred million light years is a long way. Mul-

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tiply the number of seconds in a year by 186 thousand, then multiply the result by 300 millions and you have it, about six quadrillions of miles, plus 175 trillions, not allowing anything for the 300 million leap years." You will be awed by that.

But Dr. Brisbane does not confine himself. There are investigations which show that we used to walk on our hands and knees and were covered with reddish hair. In fact, red hair is a survival of primitive days and indicates power of character and, "like power to wiggle the ears and move the scalp, indicates power to resist processes of evolution." He has shown that "excessively hot drinks set up an irritation that, like any other constant irritation of the mucous membrane, is apt to produce cancer." Yet, despite these epochal studies he has found time to make innumerable homey suggestions, one of the most valuable being an exhortation to have police dogs psychoanalyzed if you are going to have them around.

Gorrillas. It is hardly too much to say that our teacher is the foremost authority on Man vs. The Gorilla. He has concluded, after careful study of a vast amount of data, that a gorilla can whip a man any day of the week. The strength of his view may be gathered from the severe manner in which he castigated Heywood Broun when that writer foolishly stated in reporting the Carnera-Sharkey fight that the huge Italian might beat a gorilla. Firmly, but in a manner which must have made the author of *It Seems to Me* squirm, Dr. Brisbane wrote: "Mr. Broun's statement that Carnera might have beat a gorilla is not justified by anything in natural history or Du Challieu's writings. A full grown red-haired gorilla of the Gaboon country, standing more than six feet high, on his short legs, measuring 80 to 100 inches around the chest, would destroy Carnera, Sharkey and Broun, all in three minutes. An orang-outang, no heavier than a lightweight boxer, would dispose of those three big men easily." It may be noted that Broun has so far steadfastly refused to accept the master's challenge to engage an orang-outang in fisticuffs, in itself almost an admission of the foolishness of his statement. Later, when Carnera and Baer fought, our mentor wrote that "lest the ambitious young forget, it may be stated that if Carnera and Baer and any other two human fighters that ever lived, entered a ring with a full grown gorilla and made the gorilla angry, the four would not last." However, he has not yet stated whether Joe Louis would stand a chance with a gorilla. Probably, though, if we can judge from previous utterances, he would not. In fact, Dr. Brisbane has so convinced the world of the gorilla's prowess that Howard Brubaker, military expert for The New Yorker, recently gave it as his judgment that the famous editorial writer could with the aid of one gorilla and a bombing plane effectively conquer Ethiopia in a few weeks.

They Killed My Son

HARRISON GEORGE

IT WAS night before I read the terrible news. How, that morning, in Rio de Janeiro, Luis Carlos Prestes had been seized by the white terror. The bestial police assassins of Getulio Vargas. My son, Victor Barron, dead. My own son, regardless of some idiotic court that, when still a child, gave him another name. That lost him from me for long years.

But not forever. Out of the West, from the skid-road of Seattle, he came to me in 1931. A lanky lad. A real proletarian. A lumber-jack at sixteen. Doing a man's work for a boy's wage. Unable, finally, to find such a job. Conscious of the bitter wrongs suffered by his class. A brilliant mind thirsty for knowledge of the way out. Demanding answers to countless questions. Devouring books with eager passion. But, again the mutations of life. Again, separation. Now, he is dead. Murdered by the Brazilian police. Of course, the police tale is that my son "committed suicide." Political prisoners in Brazil always "commit suicide" or are "killed by their followers." In that same Police Headquarters where my son met death, a man named Niemeyer "committed suicide" some time ago. When popular outcry at long last forced an open hearing, it was proven that the police murdered him. In the case of my son, the tale of "suicide" served a double aim: to cover up his murder by the police and to conceal—by accusing the murdered boy—the real police informer who disclosed Prestes to the police.

Would you have corroborative evidence from impeccable authority? Then scan the following excerpts from the speech of Abel Chermont, member of the Federal Senate of Brazil from the State of Parana, delivered to that body under the shelter of parliamentary immunity and printed in The Imparcial of Rio de Janeiro dated March 4, 1936:

> The Captain Jose de Medeiros, after arrest by the police, has been found dead in the Vista Chineza [in the heart of Rio]. His body filled with bullets. His hands and feet broken and crushed, with 23 wounds of different degrees. His body was found in the same place where, some time ago, was also found dead the unfortunate student, Tobias Warschawski—a few days previously arrested by the police. As it happened in the Warschawski case, the police have issued a statement declaring that Captain Medeiros was killed by his followers. . . . Captain Medeiros, the soldier Absguardo Martins; two crimes, two assassinations under the State of Siege, for which assassinations I accuse the police in whose hands they were.

In the hands of these police assassins now is Luis Carlos Prestes, adding to the 17,000 persons already thrown into prison under the State of Siege. A magnificent personality for whom there is no comparison in American history, a soldier who rebelled against command to oppress the people, Prestes became the idol of the masses when, from 1924 to 1926, he led the famed "Prestes Column" of mutinous troops in an armed campaign for popular rights. He is a legendary figure that led his command now here, now there, throughout Brazil's vast dimensions. Finally forced to flee across the frontier, Prestes remained the "Knight of Hope" to the millions of his oppressed countrymen.

In those years Brazil was ruled by "President" Washington Luis, a puppet of British imperialism, with vast plantations, railways and other interests in Brazil which reach the sum of 287,306,750 pounds sterling. Against the British, seeking political influence, trade favors and vast concessions, American imperialism, with some $500,000,000 invested, intrigues with corrupt Brazilian political cliques. The big Wall Street investors are: The Electric Bond and Share Company, the Standard Oil of New Jersey, the Texas Corporation, the United States Steel (controlling important manganese mines), the American Smelting Company, Armour and Company with great packing houses.

Henry Ford holds a vast concession—for rubber—a feudal realm called "Fordlandia" of 3,700,000 acres on the Tapajos river, with extra-territorial rights of sovereignty for Ford which excludes the operation of Brazilian law within his domain. There, for luckless thousands of Negroes and Indians, "Ford wages" means a top wage of 12 cents per day, from which they must buy supplies at company stores. Under such imperialist exploiters, whose rule is enforced with the police whip and military bayonet of this or that Brazilian tyrant who can seize the title of "President of the Republic," live the great majority of 43,000,000 people. The Department of Overseas Trade of Great Britain, never accused of sentimentality, in a report on Economic Conditions in Brazil, has said: "The inhabitants are living, in many cases, in a serfdom not differing much from that of medieval times."

In 1920, the present "President," Getulio Vargas and the present Brazilian Ambassador to Washington, Oswaldo Aranha, organized the successful *coup d'etat* which, with armed force, established the present regime. At that time, both Vargas and Aranha were

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denounced as "Moscow agitators" in the name of the old regime and by the same Serapham Braga whom they now use as their chief of the "Social Section" of the police.

Vargas had been defeated for the presidency in the elections. His program had included many reforms which he has since wholly ignored. These same reforms are today supported by people whom Vargas now orders to death through the same police bloodhound, Seraphim Braga.

DISILLUSIONED, angered by the exposed demagogy and treachery of Vargas, the people have been repeatedly driven to armed rising. Already, at the end of 1930, the workers of the Ford Concession rose against the brutality and exploitation they suffered from the Emperor of Detroit. Ford's private army, aided by the Varga police sent from Para, drowned the revolt in blood. Hundreds were shot down like wild beasts. Such indignation was roused throughout the country that the Vargas government took the most drastic measures of censorship to prevent even a reference to it from appearing in the press of America and Europe.

The present "State of Siege" is the third since Vargas seized power. It was declared by him on December 17 last, to give legal face to illegal brutalities against the people: the martial law, expressly forbidden by the Brazilian Constitution except when there exists a state of war with a foreign power. The situation, said the Vargas decree, is "similar to a state of war with a foreign power."

This situation, however characterized, arose from the fact that the great majority of the Brazilian people were rallying to the banner of the National Liberation Alliance. All social strata support this Alliance, as do the trade unions and a large section of the army. This national Liberation Alliance includes, among its organized affiliates, the Tenientistas, the Socialist and the Communist parties and has won the support of the big majority of the people with its militant struggles for the rights of the masses and its program which is simple, clear and altogether just:

1. Disbandment of the fascist organization, the "Integralists."
2. Nationalization of foreign-owned enterprises, banks, etc.
3. An eight-hour working day, with one day of rest in seven.
4. Equal pay for men and women doing the same work.
5. A minimum-wage law.
6. Unemployment insurance and old-age pensions.
7. People's Committees to see that social laws are enforced.

It is this organization, with this program, that the Vargas regime terms a "creature of Moscow." It is this organization, at whose head stood the heroic Luis Carlos Prestes, leading the struggle, hunted day and night by the police bloodhounds and now fallen into their murderous hands.

At the beginning of 1935, negotiations were started between the Vargas regime and the American State Department. For Brazil, Vargas himself claimed the exclusive right to speak, illegally excluding even his own cabinet members, the Customs Director and Superior Council of Tariffs. For the United States, Ambassador Gibson, supervised from Washington by the Chief of the Latin-American Section of the State Department, Sumner Wells, he of the dark record of supporting the bloody regime of Machado in Cuba.

The terms of this Commercial Treaty are *so brazen—going beyond the "most favored* nation" clause approved by Brazilian law—that a tremendous popular outcry against selling the country to Wall Street began. The National Liberation Alliance, headed by Luis Carlos Prestes, led the masses in a continuous national mass protest demonstration. In press and parliament echoed the mass cry to reject it. Without stifling this outcry, without silencing the people with martial law, Vargas did not dare sign this enslaving "treaty."

In April, 1935, the National Liberation Alliance, the trade unions and other organizations were decreed illegal. On the very same day, the fascist Integralistas, led by one Plinio Salgado who is associated with German Nazis, and one Matarazzo, a millionaire Italian associated with Mussolini, were given full freedom of action and organization and encouraged in their attacks on strikers and anti-Vargas demonstrators. On November 24, 1935, even the Catholic Church and many progressive groups joined the Alliance in the demand to disband the fascists. But in vain.

Vargas provoked an armed rising on November 26 by a "purge" of liberal elements of the army, together with intense violence by the fascists against the masses. The rising, mainly limited to the far Northeast area, was supported in Rio de Janeiro by a large section of troops who refused to be ordered against the people. Overwhelming and savage force suppressed the rising. The cities of Pernambuco and Natal were indiscriminately bombed from the air. Artillery was used against the people.

And—under the shade of thousands of bayonets—Vargas signed the "commercial treaty" with the United States on December 2. The legalizing of martial law and of white terror was followed by the decree of December 17. No one has counted them, but hundreds were killed. Some 17,000 are in prison. Civil courts replaced by courts-martial and all constitutional rights abolished.

The list of prisoners include many of the most prominent and respected citizens of Brazil: among them, Nelson Coutinho, Secretary of Justice and well known as novelist and journalist; Caio Prado, outstanding economist and historian; Cabral Filho, prominent engineer; Francisco Mangabeira, son of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs; Captain Agildo Barata, a liberal officer beloved by the army and a long list of such notables.

On December 26, the police arrested a German, an anti-Nazi refugee from Hitler, Arthur Ewart and his wife. Concerning the brutal treatment of Ewart since arrest, the Brazilian senator, Abel Chermont, above quoted, said in the Senate:

> This man, Senhor President, suffers so much torture and so many brutal beatings, that, in spite of his rugged physique, his ribs have been broken by his torturers in the headquarters of the police, and he has had to be placed in the hospital. [From Imparcial, March 4, 1936.]

Some time in January, the writer's son, Victor Barron, was arested, charged variously with "driving an automobile for Prestes" and "operating a radio." He met death in police headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. He "gasped out his last breath," said the Associated Prses dispatch of March 5, "without fulfilling a promise he had made to United States Embassy officials that he would reveal the secrets of the Communist International's activities in Brazil." I cannot credit the tale that such "secrets" exist, or that my son knew them, much less that he promised "to reveal" them.

By chance, on the day of the boy's death, a group of three prominent British citizens, consisting of Viscountess Hastings, Lady Cameron and the novelist Richard Curtis Gavin Freeman were in Rio. Freeman was arrested when, as The N. Y. Times reported on March 8, he "apparently disregarded the police instructions and attempted to visit the police emergency hospital to ask questions." All three, representing the Anti-Slavery League, were deported on March 8.

Prestes will most certainly be murdered, illegally by the police, or with due legal form by the courts-martial, unless an avalanche of protest pours into Rio de Janeiro from all individuals and organizations that support even the most elemental of human rights. To the Brazilian people, Prestes represents a precious, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist leader. Getulio Vargas represents fascist terror, American and other foreign imperialism and the reactionary landowners. "Our present task," said the Vargas organ, on December 18, "is to wipe out the organizations of the workers.

The cry "Release Prestes!" and "Release Ewart!" must become familiar to every Brazilian consul in the United States. The demand for amnesty for all political prisoners, an end to martial law and resumption of constitutional rights, must be heard in Brazil.

Likewise, investigation of the malodorous conduct of U. S. Ambassador Gibson in the detention, torture and death of Victor Barron and the making public of the State Department instructions on his case and reports on the carrying out of those instructions, are the deserving demands of all Americans upon the Washington administration, the "Good Neighbor" of the assassin Getulio Vargas.—THE EDITORS.

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Chain Gangs in Palestine

ELLIS SAX

JERUSALEM.

COMPARED to the victims of modern British imperialism, Jesus Christ was no martyr. He was beaten and then crucified, but all of this lasted only a few hours—less than twenty-four. Roman imperialism, which inflicted these tortures, was comparatively merciful.

But today there are chain gangs in the Holy Land for those who raise either voice or hand against exploitation. There are ghastly city prisons that resemble a medieval chamber of horrors; there are hard-labor camps where prisoners are beaten ruthlessly without cause; there is a jail where similar tortures are inflicted upon women; there are chain gangs. And perhaps worst of all, the only difference made between the status of criminals and political prisoners is that the latter are treated worse. If possible.

A few months ago, a group of Communist prisoners in a Jerusalem jail rebelled against the order which placed them in the same class with depraved criminals. They refused to wear the odious prison garb, and went on a hunger strike. An eighteen-year-old youth, who did propaganda work in their behalf, was seized and thrown into the hard-labor camp at Nur Semesh, where he was forced into prison clothes. He and another man were the only political prisoners among 340 hardened criminals.

The prisoners in this camp work for the railroads. Before six o'clock in the morning they are on the job, boring holes in stones for dynamite sticks, carrying rocks and loading them in railway cars, throwing boulders down from the mountain, splitting huge rocks. Each man is given an almost superhuman quota of work, and when he fails to fulfill it, he is forced to work late, he gets nothing to eat and heavy chains are fastened to his ankles. It is a common sight—but not for tourists—to see the majority of the prisoners working in chain gangs under the broiling afternoon sun. To escape this torture, many overtax themselves by running with the heavy stones, in order to complete their quota by two in the afternoon, when work is supposed to cease. It is common for at least three or four men to be seriously injured every day as a result.

But it is not necessary to visit a chain gang to witness the almost unbelievable prison conditions maintained by the British in Palestine. The jails are usually mud-and-rock barracks, partitioned into cubicles by thick stone walls. The ceilings are low; the floor is rock and the small single window is covered, in addition to the usual gratings, with wire nets and an upward-slanting steel plate to prevent prisoners from even looking out.

There are no beds. Prisoners sleep on the rocky floor with nothing under them but one or two mats. Lice abound, and almost without exception the cells are so overcrowded that there is scarcely space in which to turn from one side to the other. To make matters worse, a plain bucket, open of course, is the only toilet facility provided. It is forbidden to remove it from 3 p.m. until 7 a.m. As a result it overflows, the contents saturating the lice-infested mats. The cells are converted by the tropical sun into furnaces by day, and are damp and cool at night; they stink day and night.

Pitah is the chief article of diet — or rather, of indigestion. It is a curious unleavened loaf composed of two thin round cakes. Even the iron-stomached Bedouin get sick from it. It is usually either burned or raw, and sometimes it is only a nest for insects. Rotten dates, vermin-infested, complete the noon meal.

In the afternoon the prisoners are fed Caravana—a thick soupy mixture of vegetables, sand and worms. Adding insult to injury, the prison authorities allow the inmates no spoons, on the theory that spoons might make the prisoners feel they have a little human dignity left. They have to dig into the slimy mess with their fingers.

Three times a week "meat" is served. The quotation marks mean that any sensible dog would spurn it; and there are only 30 grams at that. The meat is garnished with cheese and olives, which seem to have been gathered from city garbage dumps.

There is an enormous profit made on prison food. The British administration allows only 3 pence per day per prisoner (about six cents in American money). Contracts are awarded to favored merchants. The number of prisoners is so large, and the food supplied so rotten, that tidy sums are put aside by these middlemen who deal in human agony.

Many of the inmates of city prisons are given no work, and the cruel monotony drives some insane. Early in the morning they are awakened, driven outside with their mats in their arms, and counted. There was a time when they were allowed to stand upright, like men, and face their guards during this process. But today they are forced to squat on one knee, with their backs parallel to the ground, in line. Before this degrading position can be assumed, many are brutally beaten and taunted by the lumpen-proletarian elements who serve as jailors. These sadists count the prisoners by flogging them on the back with a thick rod. Often the guards make "mistakes," and then the entire painful and humiliating process of counting must be repeated.

There follows the morning "walk"—for fifteen minutes the prisoners move in a circle around the small yard. Then breakfast: one rotten pitah and a little salt!

In the Jaffa prison, where men awaiting trial are confined, they are herded back into their cells after breakfast and locked up until 10:30 a.m. The broiling Palestinian sun cooks the night stink of the cell into a choking gas, after which it soon is converted into an almost liquid state. Many prisoners faint outright during this period. At 10:30 there is another count, followed by "lunch"—a pitah and a few rotten olives or a piece of cheese. Again they are herded into the cells; cracking lice is their only occupation. At 2:30 they are again taken outside and "counted," for the last time. Then they are given another pitah, a small portion of the sickening caravana and back to the cell for the night, that is from 3 p.m. until morning.

This regimen is followed day by day, week by week, year by year, by many prisoners. Nothing to do all day but sit on the warm stone floor in a stinking cell and crack lice.

But special tortures are reserved for political prisoners. They are given the smallest cells in the place. Their one window invariably opens towards the outside latrine. Guards are told to use their own discretion when it comes to beating savagely political prisoners. And finally, there is the "zinzana." As though the ordinary prison cell were not bad enough, the authorities have had special ones built, chiefly for political prisoners. The zinzana is a very narrow, *windowless* cell, swarming with rats, lice and insects. Ordinary murderers and thieves must first be sentenced to "strokes" before being beaten, but political prisoners are at the mercy of the guards at all times.

It is not unusual for a Communist prisoner to be thrown into cells with degenerates, who have one standing order: "Abuse him!" Several of the men who refused to wear prison garb were stripped naked and had to spend the bitter nights without protection in the stone cells. Needless to say, a sufficient quantity of drinking water is rarely given, and as for water for washing purposes, the guards usually drink it on the rare occasions when it is supplied. The regulations in the Jerusalem Central Prison, for example, provide for a bath every ten days, but the men are lucky if they can bathe once in three weeks.

Prisoners who are put to work in gangs on the countryside are treated savagely. Overseers lash them furiously with heavy whips when it suits their fancy to do so, and there is no recourse possible to any authority.

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In the Central Prison, the one "rest day" each week is spent by working in the yard. For the slightest offense, prisoners are whipped and placed in zinzana.

If Christ, upon his second coming, would revisit Bethlehem, he would see little children, whom he especially loved, confined in the Women's Prison with their mothers, because there is no other provision for them. The children range from one month to twelve years of age. Recently there were thirty such children there, but only two of them received any milk—a half-glass each day. While their mothers do hard work, the little ones roll around in the dirt of the prison yard. Nearly all of them are sick with a variety of diseases. Women prisoners are fed smaller portions than the men.

Had Christ visited this hell-hole of Bethlehem during the past year he would have seen a woman forced to stop nursing her baby in order to be marched off to the fields for work; an old woman beaten and thrown into the zinzana for six days for the crime of talking to her husband through a window; a woman removed from the prison in a dying condition because the guards refused to believe her when she said she was ill; a pregnant woman who miscarried in her fifth month because she was forced to carry heavy pails of water.

In 1931 the political prisoners conducted a successful hunger strike against intolerable prison conditions. Several concessions were won, such as separate quarters, slightly better food and books. But it was not long before the administration regretted its outburst of humanitarianism. When the political prisoners sang the "International" on the anniversary of the October Revolution, the incident was seized upon as an excuse to withdraw the "privileges." Those who protested were beaten into unconsciousness.

Early last year another repressive step was taken. Up to that time the officer in charge of the prison had the power to grant "special treatment" to well-behaved prisoners and then it was actually possible for a political prisoner to be treated half-decently In January, 1935, the "Special Treatment Ordinance" of 1921 was amended. Today only the courts may grant "special treatment." Needless to say, such treatment is granted rarely to radicals and then only in an effort to play favorites in order to split the solid ranks of the politicals.

This led to the great hunger strike of last year. Toward the end of March, the administration suddenly notified the politicals in the Central Prison of Jerusalem "that they would have to wear the prison uniform and do prison labor. When the politicals threatened a hunger strike, the administration was frightened into postponing the order—but not for long.

On July 16 the authorities arrested Mohammed Mograbi, an Arab worker who had devoted most of his life to the liberation-of-the-masses movement, and Dr. Marcus Bilinsky, a Jew. When they resisted the guards who tried to clothe them in prison uniforms, they were cruelly beaten and thrown naked into the rat-infested zinzana. The fifteen other politicals in the same institution—Jerusalem's Central Prison—joined them in a hunger strike.

When the news leaked through the strict prison censorship, demonstrations of sympathy with the strikers took place throughout Palestine. On July 24, the eighth day of the strike, more than a hundred workers demonstrated in front of Zion Hall, in the center of Jerusalem. Police and detectives attacked and fired on them. Three were injured, six were arrested.

The shots were heard throughout the country. Jewish workers demonstrated in Tel Aviv; Arab workers in Jaffa. The number of hunger strikers in the prison grew to 59; sympathy hunger-strikes began in the prisons of Haifa and Acre. Prominent people vainly protested to the High Commissioner. A delegation of physicians, sent by the Tel Aviv Medical Association to examine the strikers, was refused admittance. Most of the strikers were Arabs and the Arab masses began to grow restive.

The authorities again took fright because some of the strikers were tuberculous. On the fifteenth day, forced feeding of a few of the strikers was resorted to. But, outside, the mass pressure grew. Even petty shopkeepers and workers never before interested in politics were drawn into the struggle. They circulated a petition demanding restoration of the prisoners' rights, before death should claim them. A group of Haifa intellectuals, headed by the author Arnold Zweig, sent a telegram to the High Commissioner.

Even the reactionary Histadruth executives were forced to make a feeble gesture in behalf of the strikers. Deaf and dumb to the normal, day-by-day horrors of the prison system, they were forced, by the mass pressure, to add their hypocritical voices to the rising clamor.

But the colonial regime, neither elected by the people nor responsible to them, remained unmoved. Placed in Palestine by Great Britain to safeguard the interests of British imperialism, what did it concern the authorities that a handful of political prisoners perished in a fight for their own rights?

The reign of terror increased. Those even slightly suspected of having participated in any demonstration were thrown into jail. Homes were raided.

The pressure finally caused the High Commissioner to attempt a trick. Counting upon mass ignorance of English law, he made a public statement denying that "the law of the United Kingdom" discriminates between "so-called political and other prisoners." A special edition of Ha'Or (Light) immediately exposed this lie.

The authorities then resorted to the expedient of releasing Dr. Belinsky and granting special privileges to Mograbi. But the prisoners were not fooled by this maneuver. The strike continued.

Suddenly, on the nineteenth day it mysteriously ended, with the central issue not clearly decided. What had happened?

The leading conservative Arab newspapers, which certainly lose no love on Communists, had printed editorials during the strike demanding, *as a matter of principle*, that political prisoners be treated as such. But what did the supposedly liberal Hebrew *labor* press do?

Davar is the official organ of the Histadruth, the Jewish Labor Federation of Palestine and a bona fide member of the Second International. *The Histadruth, through Davar, sold out the strike!*

At first, because of the mass pressure, it hypocritically expressed sympathy for the strikers. A little later, although completely understanding the issue at stake, Davar demanded that the government permit the hunger strikers to have—books! Political-prisoner status was not mentioned, civilian clothes were not mentioned, special treatment was not mentioned. Only books. Davar's heart bled because the Communists were denied books.

The High Commissioner joyfully took the hint. Books, he declared, would not be denied the political prisoners, and therefore the strike must end. But continued angry mass protest showed Davar that the masses were not yet fooled. It therefore began a series of atrocity stories about G. P. U. in the Soviet Union, the mistreatment of Zionists there, the subversive activities of the Palestine Communist Party, etc.

After this "education," Davar came out openly with an appeal to the public not to support the strikers and an appeal to the government not to grant their demands. It resorted to the lying claim that the Communists had demanded special privileges for themselves, but that since the government had made it clear that all prisoners are treated alike, there was no further cause to support the strike. It had all been a rascally trick of the Communists to get publicity, said Davar.

But even this new tack did not work. Renewed protests forced Davar to change its tune. It suddenly discovered that the strikers were all "pogrom makers" and "inciters" and undeserving of special treatment!

Meanwhile, the British Colonial government, taking advantage of Histadruth support, made a hazy promise to "facilitate" the granting of special treatment for political prisoners. This promise was kept in a vague sort of way for a month and a half. Then, on October 30, it was suddenly and ruthlessly scrapped. Since then every political prisoner has been forced into prison garb, made to do prison labor, beaten, discriminated against.

It is clear that the Palestinian puppets of British imperialism will not likely be moved by sacrifices on the part of the prisoners, nor even by public mass protests, unless those protests, coming from labor and liberals everywhere, are overwhelming.

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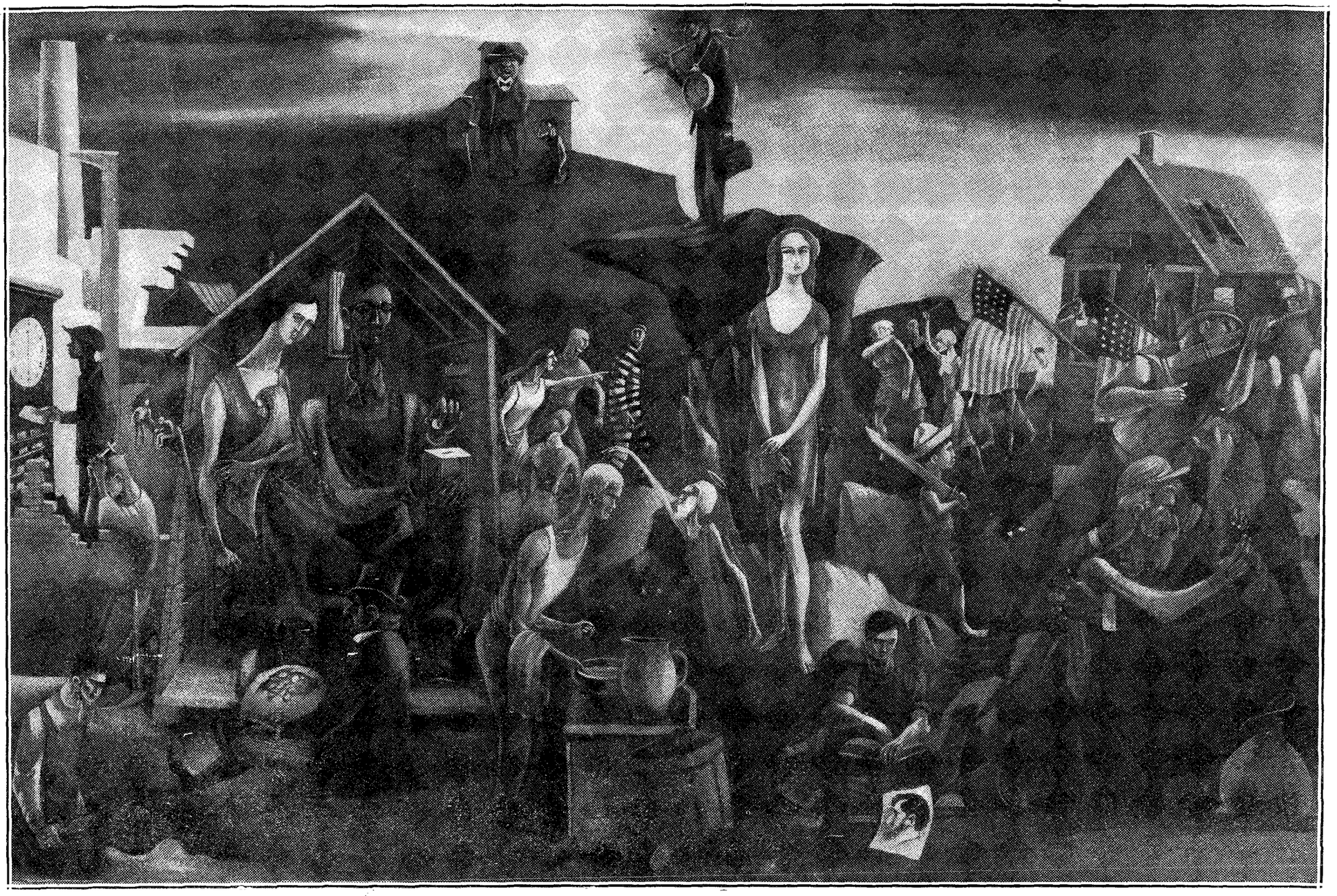

"MORALS FOR WORKERS"

Walter Quirt (Julien Levy Gallery)

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Our Readers' Forum

A Little Patient Explaining

Alice R. in her letter in THE NEW MASSES for February 18 I believe, voices a criticism that all Marxists should take to heart. Like many successful men who struggled up from poverty (they used to) and then lose patience with people still in the grip of the same poverty, radicals seem to forget the long struggle they (many of them, at any rate) engaged in before they could look upon "things social and economic whole." Many of them are impatient with people who while knowing that the world is not as they had been taught it was by parents, teachers and the press, are groping about in the dark and cannot at first distinguish things clearly when the glaring light of Marxism is turned upon them.

While I am in full sympathy with uncompromising Marxism, I believe there should be a middleman between people who have had glimpses of the true picture through apertures in the "stone wall" and those who are on the other side of the "wall." This go-between should do a little patient explaining through the holes in the wall before expecting people who have been conditioned to bourgeois culture to be happy in leaping at once to the other side.

Speaking from personal experience, I know that time is required in accustoming oneself to the solid food of Marxist thought when one has been fed on the pap of popular opinion and there are few whose digestion is not too flabby to assimilate real food without the help of a tonic.

Shelton, Washington. CORA G. CORMIER.

"Shaving and Brain Activity"

That sterling, though somewhat un-Marxian economist, Bruce Barton, recently sounded off at a convention of the paper trade. Professor Barton believes that conditions are definitely improved and he hopes for better times for the country because "there is no better gauge of business conditions than paper consumption."

Don't misunderstand. This is not the famed adman's way of saying, "Let them eat paper." No. He explained to the convention by saying that throughout the depression he remained optimistic because whiskers continued to grow. (Don't go 'way, this is only the beginning!) There is, he declared, "an unexplained and undefined, but nevertheless definite connection between shaving and brain activity—thinking" (to you!). When a man awakes in the morning to find that he has a beard, our economist explains, he shaves. This stimulates his brain and he has ideas. These ideas must be put on paper in some form, and thus. . . . (*Now* do you begin to get the magnificence of this?)

Some of the many ex-employes of Mr. Barton's ad factory (fired during the Big Shot's period of optimism) might wonder: Suppose a man awakens to find he has a beard but no money to buy shaving cream. He can't shave, but he still gets ideas. He letters those ideas on a placard and goes parading in front of the local relief bureau. The relief administrator sends for a well-shaven cop with different ideas, and. . . .

But I see I'm digressing into needless social fantasy, for paper consumption is on the increase and all's well with America! GEORGE BODONI.

Praise of Orozco

THE NEW MASSES is to be congratulated on various points for its recent achievements, but I know of none more worthy of praise than the printing of Orozco's pictures, those lithographs in the current issue. I hope there will be a great deal more of this sort of thing, particularly of the kind like Orozco's which are of social significance without being too "obvious." Perhaps Rockwell Kent will contribute something else.

Chicago, Ill. HARRY THORNTON MOORE.

Still Up in the Air

My subscription expires this issue, say you. Well, I'll tell you why I haven't renewed it and why I am debating whether I should or not.

It was paid for, in the first place, by a friend who thought I should read it. She was right about some things. I enjoyed your lucid book reviews, I felt like cheering some of the editorials, and the article by the girl named Mitchell about the Mercy Killer was as fine a piece as I remember having read anywhere. BUT I object to a great many other features about your magazine.

In the first place, I think even the renowned Mr. Streicher's pornographic library so many people mention these days is hardly over some of your cartoons when it comes to sheer vulgarity. I agree with the point, understand me. But *cripes,* the vulgarity! Another thing is I frequently find your editorial writers are talking in slogans. How I detest talking slogans. Can't you put out a magazine that will mean something to any English-speaking human who picks it up, instead of something that carries meaning only for a little sectarian few. Lastly and most important, I do not think everything that happens in the Soviet Union is beyond reproach and should be lauded to the heavens, and I do not think that Stalin is Jesus Christ or even Moses or whatever it is I'm supposed to think highest—brotherly love, perhaps. Anyway, he's not. I hate the cheesy kind of humor which decrees that you shall call Miss Perkins "Finky Frances" even though I condemn her in the present instance. John L. Spivak's articles were worth a million dollars, just the same.

You are not going to make over your book to suit me, and I am not going to make over my likes to suit you. So it's still up in the air.

MRS. W. W. WALLACE.

Miss Miller's Fancy

Some time ago I happened in upon a meeting of Friends of the Sharecroppers. I listened to the reading of letters from Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama with their tales of starvation, evictions and how a huge proportion of the population is actually held in peonage. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when attending a lecture at Columbia I heard Caroline Miller, author of *Lamb in His Bosom,* deplore the emphasis such a writer as Erskine Caldwell places upon poverty in the South.

Miss Miller said "One percent of the people of the North are poor, as are one percent of the people of the South, as you will find, one percent of the people of China and India are poor." It is too bad that the rest of her audience had not heard the bona fide letters of sharecropper misery which I had heard with my own ears, for they would have taken her words for what they were really worth—exactly nothing. JUNE STEWART.

Strikers and Anti-Fascists

Though the elevator strike did not end in a complete victory, one thing it did accomplish which I think will interest your readers. Vice-President Thomas Young of the Building Service Employes called on the Trade Union Commission of the American League Against War and Fascism to expose the role of the Hearst press. From the outset of the strike, Hearst strained every effort to isolate the strikers from their middle-class allies—the tenants. And he wasn't content with Red-baiting and the usual Hearst lies, but urged vigilante violence.

The American League responded by distributing 50,000 leaflets calling for a city-wide boycott of the Hearst papers. Members of the League joined the picket line, carrying placards which read "Hearst says throw Bambrick out of New York. We say throw out Hearst!" And Heywood Broun agreed to speak for the League over WMCA on "Hearst—Fascist and Strike Breaker."

This was the first time an important trade union recognized the direct aid that a huge united-front organization such as the American League can give to workers on strike. Hearst found he had opposition from the trade unions and from the middle class and professionals organized into the broad, effective American League. SYLVIA KENT.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

MacLeish and the Critics

PUBLIC SPEECH, by Archibald MacLeish. Farrar and Rinehart. $1.

THE appearance of this beautiful and moving collection of poems offers an opportunity to assess the value of left criticism as a contemporary influence.

Until the production of his verse-play, *Panic,* MacLeish's career was a persistent challenge to the Left. Even in some of the most aloof moments of the irony that characterized so large a part of his early work his attitude was never entirely that of the non-participator. He had positive irritations and aversions. In a man of MacLeish's sensitiveness and his awareness of the artist's social potentialities it was inevitable that he would not be found among the shrinkers crying for exemptions from the encircling conflict.

When the crisis finally forced political and economic issues upon the consciousness of even hitherto unaffected groups, such as the writers and critics of the country, MacLeish's first reaction was one of irritation and dismay. In his poem "To the Social Muse" he asserted for poetry the ignoble freedom of the camp-follower who dispenses with the dangerous dignity of principles. About the same time he wrote his famous letter "To the Young Men of Wall Street" in which he appealed to them to save the system and provide a secure place in it for the artist and thus to win and hold his loyalty. There was, it can be said, warning as well as appeal in the communication.

These could not but draw attacks from the Left. To no one in the revolutionary movement, not even to the most sectarian and materialist of its political spokesmen, has culture ever had a role that needed apology. A general diffusion and heightening of culture has always, in fact, been the objective of the revolutionary movement and even the obscurest arts have been given a place not piously in the future but in the present. The arts are counted upon as instruments of revolution, being instruments of creation. It was, therefore, not only as revolutionaries but as artists that the writers on the Left counterattacked.

Was MacLeish affected by this criticism? His *Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller, Radio City,* seemed to indicate it. There he made pointed and scornful attacks upon the pretensions of capitalists as the "makers" of America. He portrayed them instead as the devastators of America; he showed how shameful and inglorious their conquest of the continent had been, how, in effect, it had been a long raid upon the fertile land and the creative people. Incorporated in the poems, however, were perverse slurs upon the contemporary American revolutionaries. Although he recognized the martyred alien labor that had helped to clear and build the powerful America of the twentieth century he could not yet accept aliens as participants in the social reconstruction of the nation. He made them appear gross and robot-like, their ideas like something wound into their mechanism and their slogans, not reactions of a mind and a heart, but automatic responses to automatically applied stimuli.

This attitude was then characterized as "unconscious fascism" and there was good reason for attacking it. There had been previous evidence in MacLeish's utterance of an anti-semitic strain. In a literary essay published a long time ago he had implied that the corrupt state of American literary culture could partially be laid to the Jewish publishers, writers and critics, though in all three categories they were in the minority. His poem "Einstein," at least to some readers, gave the impression of a demeaning portrait of the great scientist as the Eternal Wandering Jew being rebuffed in the Fourth Dimension as he had been rebuffed in the other three. There was point therefore in not overlooking it but in making an issue of it instead and bringing it out into full consciousness if, for MacLeish, it had not emerged there.

The terms of the left counterattack were in too many places crude and unjust. It is a tribute to the vitality of MacLeish's mind that he reacted more to the validities in the criticism than to the pettinesses. The reaction, it should further be emphasized, was not left to rest on the plane of ideas alone. By taking a leading part in an inquiry into a strike and in other activities and by examining for himself the cultural front of the revolutionary movement he found enough to make for himself a reappraisal of values. For so he discovered for himself the vitality both of the demand for and the production of culture in the revolutionary movement. He saw how, with the barest material resources, it had brought into being, within the disintegrating culture of capitalism, a counter-culture that, beside other achievements, had restored that interaction between audience and artist that marks the most creative period of a civilization.

MacLeish's verse-play *Panic,* was his own answer to his letter "To the Young Men of Wall Street." True, he adorned the downfall of capitalism with an heroic symbol of which it is unworthy; true, he made the revolutionary movement a matter of groping need and compulsion rather than of directed vision, by putting it under the symbolic leadership of a blind man. Nevertheless he projected in it, in decisive and memorable terms, the end of capitalism and the inevitability of the revolution.

In his new book he has gone further. Here we have several poems that can be counted among the most beautiful and effective in revolutionary literature. The book, as a whole, has a quality that was infrequent in his earlier work. It shows a close apprehension of realities. It is written with impressive dignity. This is indeed *Public Speech* that honors the auditor and therefore in an added degree the speaker. Gone is the sometimes capricious irony that placed upon experience imposed attitudes making impossible complete expression. Now experience is expressed in direct terms. Even in the group of poems in the volume dealing with a personal ordeal the terms are those of the living episode and the living memory, not in the sublimations of symbolism. One of the most accomplished craftsmen in the whole range of English poetry, his skill is even more subtly used here than in the earlier poems. Though there is no single poem of the magical beauty of "To Andrew Marvell" there is on the whole less of the oversmooth rhythm that made his verbal music formerly somewhat monotonous. The gain is in the strengthening of ideas, the sharpening of comprehension.

The volume is, I believe, evidence that for all its excesses proletarian criticism has been helpful. By this I do not mean to slur over

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what is undoubtedly the more important element in the matter, Mr. MacLeish's own sensitiveness and honesty of mind. But it seems to me that, however provocative of resentment much of this criticism was, the valid outweighed the invalid. Other cases come to mind. Albert Halper's second novel, *The Foundry,* a very fine piece of work, indicated that he had been helped by the criticism of his first book *Union Square,* for the advances in the later novel were precisely in the aspects which had been severely handled in the criticisms of *Union Square.*

Left criticism has had a useful function. Its maturity should be marked not by relaxation of its watchfulness upon bourgeois books but an intensification of its watchfulness upon itself. It needs now to rid itself of its remnants of sectarianism, as antiquated equipment; not to withdraw from the front lines.

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Round the Elephant and Back Again

NO VILLAIN NEED BE, by Vardis Fisher. Caxton Printers and Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

WITH this, the final volume of his ambitious tetralogy, Vardis Fisher ends the tortured pilgrimage of Vridar Hunter by returning him, a wiser man, to the Antelope Hills of his nativity. Vridar has learned many things, not from books as in *We Are Betrayed,* but from human beings. He concludes that men are beasts, and the love of fighting is the *real* cause of war, and sexual neurosis and the greed of munitions makers are secondary manifestations. Communists don't go far enough in their diagnosis of society and their prescription for its ills. Society will evolve into something heroic when people begin to search their own bosoms, as Vridar has done. Until then, it is best to sit high on a hilltop and to realize that money never brought anybody happiness, that the rich are unhappier than the poor.

Vardis Fisher knows how to write. When he confines himself to narrative rather than to exotic flights into intellectual themes, his prose flows with eloquent ease. The latter tendency mars the third and fourth volumes which are stuffed with prodigious doses of purely intellectual exercises all too copiously mixed with quotations from books. In all four volumes, however, sex is predominant. *In Tragic Life* was a passionately honest exploration into the sex life of an abnormally sensitive boy in a frontier environment. *Passions Spin the Plot* dealt with his adolescence and young manhood, his marriage to Neloa, the half-Indian girl, whose earthy quality and simple directness contrasted with Vridar's theatricalism and lent her an enigmatic air. The account of Vridar's early life in the Antelope Hills and at college has the persuasive grace that marks Vardis Fisher's best work.

At Wasatch College Vridar is nominally an instructor in English, but he seems to function almost exclusively as psychiatrist and father confessor to the female students. Sexually frustrated girls offer him their bodies, but he declines with firm kindness and understanding. Now he is learning from people, not books. He goes to New York to teach, saying after surveying the city from the Woolworth Tower: "This city is a grand thing. It seems to be the greatest psychopathic ward on earth."

Vridar's friends should be enough to delight any earnest Freudian. They are wisecrackers, satyrs, nymphomaniacs, misanthropes, and practising psychiatrists who delight in putting one another under the x-ray.

They all tell the same dirty stories Vridar used to be infuriated with, when they were retailed in plain English by Neloa's lowbrow friends; but now, studded with French phrases and intellectualized, they pass.

An inept Communist who is named Telv Ethlec talks stereotyped patter that shows up very poorly indeed beside the scintillating, epigram-starred conversation of the others. He is used as their foil.

Vridar visits Europe, sees children drilling in Italy, sees the blight of fascism at first hand. He does not go to the Soviet Union, yet when he returns to America he knows all about Communists and their faults. He writes Telv that Communists don't understand that the inner revolution must come first, that only education will save the world. He is going back to the Antelope hills. He is eager to know what is going on, but he doesn't think anything can be done about it at present. He is confident that humanity will conquer fear, men will search their own bosoms at last, discovering that no villain need be, for "we are betrayed by what is false within." He is writing a novel about himself, probing himself to the

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quick again, pausing now and then to laugh heartily.

In his letter to Telv, Vridar complained that Communists are like unto the three wise men who went to see the elephant, though all of them were blind. And they only felt *part* of the beast. But Vridar sees all, knows all. If Vridar has known any other Communist than Telv, assuming that a Telv ever lived and is not merely one of Mr. Fisher's metaphors, we find no evidence of this in the book. Communists generally do not find time to sit around with psycopaths sipping gin and swapping wisecracks. Nor can I believe that college students and instructors, by and large, are satyrs and nymphomaniacs. Some of them are, but we should look the elephant over from stem to stern. We are astounded to learn that Vridar, too, has once been a "Communist."

There are in this book sporadic flashes of the distinguishing virtues of the first two. Fisher makes some keen observations about the literary life in New York, and there are descriptive passages of beauty and power. But the cocksure Vridar who relentlessly throws into the teeth of everybody, not sparing himself, startling truths which are not so startling after all and often not true, or only partially true, is a man who is likely to tax the patience of even those reviewers who rightfully hailed Fisher's resurrection (he had published two novels before *In Tragic Life*) as belated justice to one of America's most able and uncompromising novelists.

JACK CONROY.

The Novel That Came Too Late

THE LAST PURITAN, by George Santayana. Scribner's. $2.75.

IT IS natural that Santayana, the philosopher in whom the poet was always present, should finally seek to give his philosophy and his life the vital organism of a novel. He has done it with notable success. And in this way he has given perhaps the most pointed possible expression to the major dramatic conflict of his life: he has been the antagonist at once of the puritan temperament which surrounded him in Boston and of the philosophy of the "genteel tradition" that underlay it. The result in this novel is a concrete realization of his philosophy.

Few men have steadily exerted a more potent influence over American intellectuals in the past thirty years than Santayana. They felt a sympathy with his polemic against the puritan way of life and with the cardinal importance which he ascribed to aesthetic experience. What is more, these congenial ideas were couched in such distinguished prose that literary people acclaimed him as their official philosopher, while some philosophers came to regard him primarily as a man of letters. Consequently, whatever his intentions, the effect of a novel in this style is to sugar-coat the philosophic pill and so to popularize Santayana's outlook, at a time when the populace needs more than scenes at the deathbed of Puritanism. In this sense the novel has come too late. The times are demanding more of literature than it can give.

With the hero of the book, Oliver Alden, who died a little while after the Armistice, died the puritanism of which he was the last representative. But the death of puritanism was shared by its enemy, an aestheticism lacking in a sense of social responsibility. The hysterical wave of irresponsibility which followed the war was only the post-mortem reflex of the corpse of aestheticism. An alternative had in the meantime presented itself in Communism from which it was not possible to avert the eyes and which a man of integrity was obliged to adopt. This is Santayana's own opinion, though it is as yet more nightmare than vision. He writes of Oliver: "Yes, free, rare and delicate soul as he was, he would have accepted for himself this Red Communist tyranny that puts a grimy revolver to our noses and growls: 'Be like me or die.' . . . The Bolshies have the one element of puritanism which was the most important, at least for Oliver: integrity of purpose and scorn of all compromises, practical or theoretical." Thus, as we see, George Santayana's conception of Communism is rather lurid, but the essential insight into our time is there. Dying puritanism and its contemporary attitudes have become irrelevant. The puritan ethic, whose origins Max Weber has illuminated, was created for an earlier stage of capitalism and is now inapplicable. Santayana knows that, "in order to escape chaos without imposing any fictions or false hopes upon mankind." Oliver would have chosen the way of Communism, had he survived into our day.

The Last Puritan is thus essentially a prewar novel which attempts to exhibit the futility at which the outworn puritan tradition had arrived. The sad hero is the victim of the "agonized conscience" of Calvinism. At the crucial points in his life he is torn between an inhuman Calvinist duty and the realization of the freer part of him, and he invariably chooses the former to the detriment of his happiness. When Oliver dies it is clear that this conflict had cancelled all significance out of his life.

But why did puritanism end in Oliver Alden and what conditions made it expire? The very limited context within which the novel operates precludes an answer to this question. For the artistic selection which Santayana has exercised is far too urbane. The futility of the hero's life seems to have no roots in the dense social life about him, but seems a consequence of an autonomous mental existence. The story lacks three-dimensionality. Incident is the occasion for

"Well, how does it feel to be working, son?" *Serrano*

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philosophizing, which is itself carried on with generality, not with a close grip on the specific issues of our time. And that is why the fact that Oliver was the last in the puritan line is a floating phenomenon. His view of life in the novel is not attached to the soil in which it could no longer be nourished. In the first hundred pages Santayana does occasionally intimate that the Aldens and puritanism have some relation to an external world of industry and finance and poverty, but such passages are incidental only. If Santayana had carried through the implications of these passages, if he had utilized more of this kind of setting, he would have the better prepared his readers for his own conclusion that if Oliver had lived, his integrity would have led him to embrace Communism.

Despite the philosophical character of the novel, it remains the sort of book that one wishes to read through without interruption. It is amazing that a man who has written philosophy, however beautifully expressed, all his life, should have mastered the tricks of the novelist's trade with such thoroughness. It is shown even in his awareness of his liimtations, which he sets forth himself, in the Epilogue, anticipating his critics. Yet, with all its limitations, this book will take its place among the great American novels, just as everything else that Santayana has written is a part of our literature. His style is a kind of verbal arabesque in which ideas and sensuous imagery are constantly interwoven in a minutely articulated design, and the stuff of which this design is made is durable. We enjoy the novel as we should a work out of the past. A novel for the present would have had the orientation which a contemporary Oliver would be morally obliged to accept.

LOUIS FERRIS.

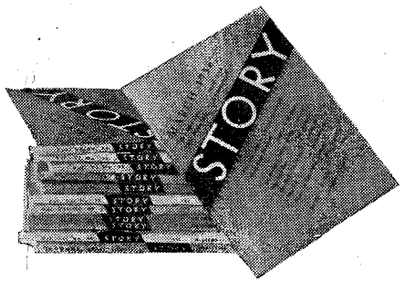
Duranty and the U.S.S.R.

I WRITE AS I PLEASE, by Walter Duranty. Simon and Shuster. $3.

DURANTY tells us that, during an interview, Stalin told him: "You have done a good job in reporting the U.S.S.R. although you are not a Marxist, because you tried to tell the truth about our country and to understand it and explain it to your readers. I might say that you bet on our horse to win when others thought it had no chance, and I am sure you have not lost by it."

Previous to his railroad accident in France in 1923, as a correspondent attached to the headquarters of the British, American and other militarist adventurers in Riga, Duranty no doubt thought he was telling the truth in his dispatches to his newspaper when he took his information from the anti-Soviet propaganda cooks in Riga. When he got into the Soviet Union and used his own eyes, then he found a story to tell. That, together with his native honesty, made his Russian correspondence outstanding.

This is the secret of the immense and justified interest Mr. Duranty's book has aroused. Moscow, Duranty testifies, in his final chapter: "Time Forward!" "is the most interesting place in the world. As a newspaperman I would not change it for any other assignment. It is interesting politically because there before your eyes is being created something wholly new in human history." Duranty is not a politician and decidedly not a Marxist, as Josef Stalin told him. One cannot say that the insight he gives into the political line of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. and of the Communist International is any too deep. But it would be futile to take issue with him on his utterances and estimates regarding this line just as it would make no sense to object to Duranty's habit of rambling off from the Five Year Plan to his childhood days in England, or to one of the many war scenes in France with which the book abounds. It is this very rambling style that gives this book its particular flavor. The book represents a friendly, human, interesting, sometimes nonchalant, sometimes philosophizing, sometimes intimate talk, without strict regard for theory or chronology. It is



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the talk of a man of the world who has seen a great deal and who with his human insight grasped, that "Russia" is the place which can make the job of a journalist worthwhile. In the beginning he was gullible enough to swallow the Riga stories about horses being devoured alive by starving Russians in the middle of city streets (which stories duly appeared on the front pages of The New York Times, as Duranty now somewhat blushingly admits). He discovered, however, sooner than any of his newspaper colleagues, what these stories were worth.

One can hardly agree with Duranty's theory that Trotsky's fall came about mainly because his vanity and callousness (according to Duranty) kept him away from Lenin's funeral. But one gets to feel the tense atmosphere of those January days in Moscow when Lenin's body lay in the Hall of Columns. It would be idle talk to take issue with some of the casual remarks Duranty makes about Stalin, but he (Duranty) must be credited for not joining the scribblers of the other bourgeois newspapers in their talk about the "obscurity" of Stalin before Lenin's death. Duranty takes justifiable pride in reprinting part of his cable to The New York Times on Jan. 15, 1923, where he characterizes Stalin in these terms: "Little known abroad, but one of the most remarkable men in Russia and perhaps the most influential figure here today. Stalin is officially the head of the ministry for the nations that constitute the Soviet Union, and more important still, is General Secretary of the Communist Party, but his influence is not measured by his official position" . . . "During the last year Stalin has shown judgment and analytical power not unworthy of Lenin." Duranty is fully justified in saying: "Today, twelve years later, I think that the above passage gives me the right to say that I did pick the right horse on which to bet in the Russian race."

In his own way Duranty grasped the significance of the Five Year Plan, of the great epoch introduced by the plan, of the character of the builders of Socialism. Duranty's book too, often beats with the pulse of Moscow, of the U.S.S.R. and this is saying a great deal.

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Art

Walter Quirt

ONE of the greatest errors made by the critics who reported the exhibition of Walter Quirt's paintings (Julien Levy Galleries) has been to call him a "revolutionary Dali." Quirt's unified, logical synthesis compressed into exquisite miniature painting is the antipodes of the irrational, intuitional, nightmare dreams of Surrealism. Quirt and Dali have little in common except a love of meticulous painting on a miniature scale and an ability to see objects realistically in unexpected and novel relationships.

Quirt's exhibition as a whole might be termed The Death of Humanism. It is an ironic comment on the present state of our society in relation to the ideals, which it once promulgated at the beginning of its development. To underscore the irony, Quirt has consciously or unconsciously used compositional motifs which derive from the early Renaissance painting.

His models seem to be the Florentine painters of the early Renaissance—the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the moralist painters of German Reformation—Breughel and Hieronymous Bosch. He applies color in their manner and uses their precise linear perspective, whose rules were worked out experimentally at that period. Quirt's painting is tight, like that of early realistic painting in Florence; it employs classical composition. His is a self-imposed restraint, the better to emphasize his meaning. Actually he rejects the esthetic of classicism by giving a superb satire on it.

Quirt is a transition artist. He is an American with the inherited traditions of European culture. He is at the same time a revolutionary artist who dreams of a new world. He therefore finds himself at the crossroads between two cultures—one directed to the future and the other built on the past. His work is a resume of painting tradition derived from the Renaissance—a return to the sources of our culture and a demonstration of how these sources have been rejected in essence, while the empty shell has continued to receive lip-service.

In taking the old classical form of the Renaissance and imbuing it with new content, Quirt is doing what the Constantinian artists of Rome did in an earlier age: they used the iconography of Roman art to embody in it the new Christian legend, which was in the process of forming itself.

In such a manner Quirt, on the collapsing structure of bourgeois culture, which saw its dawn in the Renaissance, raises the revolutionary banner. Yet as culture is continuous and proceeds historically with few breaks, he uses the old forms—rejecting the decadent researches of modernist and surrealist art for a form created in the youth of the present system. He uses Marxism as the yardstick to measure the shortcomings of American life and the position of the workers. He strips the garments from idealism and reveals the greed, hypocrisy and corruption underneath. Even the titles of his pictures are moral lessons: etched in ironic derision: "Give us this day our Daily Bread," "Consider the Lilies of the Field," "Inferior" (of the Negro), "Opium of the People," etc.

Take for example one of the most complex of his compositions: "Morals for Workers." Here the painter indulges in an orgy of moral indignation. Every one of the conventional virtues so carefully inculcated in American institutions is held up for inspection and mocked at with bitter irony. Centered in the composition is that golden girl of the American magazine cover—emaciated and in rags. To her left in a rickety shack sit the worker's family—the sacred family of Mary, Joseph and the child, hungry but putting their last penny in the savings bank—thrift is a virtue. Cleanliness is next to godliness, so the poor Hooverville tramp washes in the cracked bowl outside while a spry old saint in a red nighty blesses his efforts—motif of the Baptism. At the top of the picture, the worker punches the time clock, for punctuality will reward you and if not you, the capitalist who waits. Far to the right of the golden girl, workers lean from their tumble-down hut to salute silken American flags—patriotism is sacred. Nearby a young boy studiously reads books with the picture of Lincoln beside him—application will make you Horatio Alger or the president. Below in the furthest left corner the ragged worker embraces the bloated capitalist—love thy neighbor as thy self—and the days of your hunger and exploitation will be long.

Such painting belongs spiritually to the same realm as Giotto's frescoes of the virtues and vices and those moral sermons, in fresco, of the Siennese with their vision of the Last Judgment. Quirt's whole gallery of pictures is a last judgment on bourgeois culture based on the exploitation of the worker and the farmer—the two stalwart heroes who appear always united in his paintings, martyrs of a new epic which is yet to be portrayed.

CHARMION VON WIEGAND.

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The Theater

Hirsch Lekert at the Artef

ON Freedom Square in Minsk, a monument has been erected in memory of Hirsch Lekert, the shoemaker who in 1902 made an attempt on the life of Governor von Vaal of Vilna to avenge the humiliation of his comrades whom von Vaal had ordered flogged for taking part in a May First demonstration. No less enduring than the monument of stone are two plays by two noted Yiddish poets and dramatists, A. Kushnirov of the Soviet Union and H. Levick of the United States, dealing with this memorable episode in the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

In 1932, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the execution of the revered proletarian martyr, the Artef Theater produced the Kushnirov play, which has now been revived and enriched both in direction and performance. In its current version, *Hirsch Lekert* is easily the best production of the Artef, *Recruits* notwithstanding.

In choosing Kushnirov's rather than Levick's *Hirsch Lekert,* the Artef chose political lucidity and theatrical vitality in preference to introspection and philosophic questioning. Kushnirov has admirably succeeded in portraying Lekert as a typical revolutionary worker, rather than a hero; and the martyr act of the shoemaker as the inevitable outcome of a social conflict rather than the culmination of the inner drama of the protagonist. Without sacrificing the spirit of reverence that is associated with the name of Lekert, the Soviet dramatist faithfully and with critical discernment presents the political realities of the day, the indecision of the leadership of the Bund to which Lekert adhered, the demoralizing effect of the "legal labor movement" sponsored by Colonel Zubatov of the Political Espionage in Minsk, the rising tide of revolutionary discontent and the fury of the czarist terror let loose by the von Vaals in a vain effort to stem the tide.

There is always the danger, in dramatizing social conflicts, of submerging the individual and reducing character portrayal to mere symbols of social categories. Kushnirov has escaped this danger. His characters possess a distinctiveness and individuality, while at the same time typifying the social forces at play. The plot, too, has the authenticity of historic events and the solid structure of a well made play along standard lines. While written in rhymed verse, which at times results in stilted phrasing, the dialog sounds colloquial and spontaneous.

Benno Schneider's direction of this play is little short of perfection. This brilliant *regisseur* is not merely a splendid teacher and maker of actors, but also a poet and painter who composes in terms of *mise-en scene,* lighting effects and the elusive subtlety of rhythm. Never has Schneider achieved such blending of theatrical invention and dramatic power as in *Hirsch Lekert.* His bits of delightful "director's comedy" are as dazzling as his dramatic scenes are overwhelming. The May Day demonstration is a masterpiece of craftsmanship, especially when one considers the tiny proportions of the Artef stage.

In point of individual performances *Hirsch Lekert* is, indeed, a new triumph for the Artef Players Collective. While M. Schneiderman in the title role may sound at times somewhat declamatory and hollow, A. Hirshbein's performance in the role of von Vaal, S. Nagoshiner's in the part of the colonel of the espionage department and S. Anisfeld's as the chief of police are truly splendid. In the lesser parts the Artef performers achieve equally effective characterizations and the ensemble is invariably good. The difference between the original production of *Hirsch Lekert* and the present version is a difference in acting quality and the depth and subtlety of direction. Both Schneider and his players have gone ahead in these four years.

Thus another monument has been erected to honor the memory of Hirsch Lekert. With reverence and fervor the Artef has produced a play worthy of its theme.

NATHANIEL BUCHWALD.

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The Screen

IT IS disconcerting when a serious reviewer, after carefully deciding to heap lavish praise upon a Hollywood movie which he has visited, in the first place, only in the interests of science, reads in the following morning and evening newspapers a practically unanimous blast of condemnation for the same film. I can explain this avalanche of harsh adjectives, such as "bogus," "tactless," "dull," "aimless," etc., only by terming it a sad example of the growing sectarianism of the capitalist press. In short, my critical colleagues, those rabid fanatics, show symptoms of having standards.

The side-splitting, heart-stopping, soul-searing, five-star, smash-hit that nobody seemed to like but me is a rather mild affair called *Klondike Annie,* featuring Mae West and Victor McLaglen. For us genuine, dyed-in-the-wool movie hopheads, who ask of the celluloid opera only that it contain no Shirley Temple and no social implications (Will Hays variety), it fills the bill. It's done according to formula, through and through, the same Mae West and the same McLaglen, but there are a lot of new scenes dubbed into the old, familiar sounds. The story concerns a murder committed by Mae West in San Francisco, her flight to Alaska, an exchange en route with the identity of a Salvation Army girl who has died on the same boat, the rebirth of Mae's soul in a Nome mission and finally her recognition that the man she really loves is not the millionaire but Jimmy, the rising young radio star. No I beg your pardon, I'm afraid *Klondike Annie* has become slightly confused with a couple of other superfilms. At any rate, it's redhot drama, take my word for it.

But the really outstanding film of the whole year, and I haven't seen it so much as mentioned anywhere else, is something quite different. The picture, which may have been playing the second-run houses for months, for all I know, is a delicate but amazing vehicle that goes by the strange title of *Audioscopiks.* It's a movie in three dimensions, just like a steriopticon picture, except that it moves. And before you can even look at the screen, which is otherwise a ghastly blur that looks like nothing at all, the management has to dole out to you a special pair of spectacles, the left lens of which is dark green and the right lens a dark red.

The scenario of *Audioscopiks,* it can be admitted at once, is not entirely original and a little too schematic. It deals with seltzer squirting, trombone playing, leg waving, baseball throwing and allied subjects, the whole object being to have something come out of the screen and smack the spectator square in the eye. It is in its achievements with this last effect that the film's true greatness lies. Whoever sees it for the first time feels exactly like a Lithuanian peasant viewing his first movie of an onrushing locomotive and only the thinnest veneer of soulless sophistication keeps you, too, from lamming for the nearest exit. The whole thing opens up enormous new vistas in the cinema world. Think, for instance, and to bring the matter immediately home, of seeing Mae West in three dimensions.

Yet audioscopiks have certain disadvantages that make their future seem ominous, to say the least. The vari-colored spectacles that you have to wear while watching them makes the screen several shades darker than even the ordinary screen and in fact the picture I saw appeared to have been shot at about midnight, probably by the light of a small and fog-wrapped moon. The movies, it has been pointed out, are in their infancy and no one, even today, can say just what kind of a race of people will come to dwell a hundred or two hundred years from now in the dim and hushed cathedrals of the cinema. Science claims that certain species of fish inhabiting the deepest and darkest spaces of the sea have, after several generations of this sort of thing, come to lose entirely the use of their eyes. And it isn't hard to picture a race of creatures who once were men, but who now have acquired a lot of new, strange, self-protective characteristics, as they push and stumble their blind way up and down between the narrow and crowded rows of seats in some Paramount Theater of the thirtieth century. Of one difficulty to which the body will have adapted itself, I am certain. Everybody's legs will have been scrunched, stepped on and finally worn off clear up to the knees.

KENNETH FEARING.

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LESS than a month remains to enter THE NEW MASSES CARTOON TITLE contest, with its $1,500 prizes. The closing date is April 15. Entries are steadily increasing as the deadline approaches, and everything indicates that this will continue as the time shortens. We urge you, therefore, to enter at once. This will help our judges to arrive at a quick decision after April 15, for naturally they will need more time to pick the winners if everyone holds off till the last moment.

Plans for our special quarterly are nearing fruition. We've printed altogether eight such 48-page issues since we began weekly publication in January, 1934. All of them have been well received and a few brought us many bouquets and not a single brickbat. But we believe that none of the previous quarterlies has the importance and immediacy of the one which will be published April 7.

Devoted exclusively to middle-class subjects and specific middle-class problems, this quarterly issue will be something of a handbook of information and discussion. A special editorial committee, headed by Lewis Corey and consisting of Joseph Freeman, Isidor Schneider and Stanley Burnshaw, has gathered and prepared the material. Some of the most important writers on the subject have collaborated in the project. Among the many features are the following:

Mary Van Kleeck, on united action for security;

Heywood Broun, the effects of the strike experience on middle-class people;

Lewis Corey, the mind of the middle class;

Brooks Otis, the struggles of the middle class;

Francis J. Gorman, middle class and trade unions;

Loren Miller, the Negro middle class;

Granville Hicks, fascism's menace to culture;

Three articles on the middle class under political systems: under capitalism, by Anna Rochester; under fascism, by Harold Ward; under socialism, by Joseph Freeman;

The degradation of craft functions under capitalism: science, by Mark Graubard; art, by Meyer Schapiro; literature by Isidor Schneider;

Corliss Lamont, on the appeal to reason;

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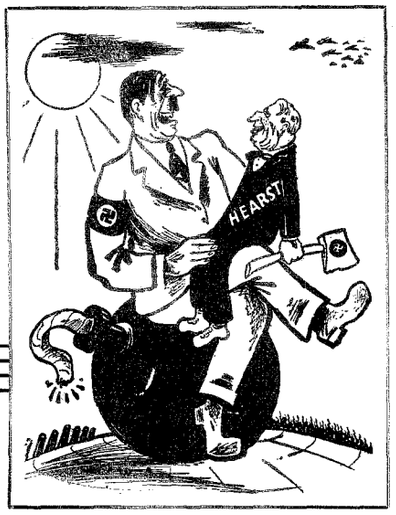

Cartoon Number One

Cartoon Number Two

Cartoon Number Three

IRENEE DuPONT
will not be present—

among those taking part in this exciting $1,500 NEW MASSES contest. He needs neither the $1,000 first prize nor THE NEW MASSES. You, on the other hand, need THE NEW MASSES because it is the most challenging magazine in America today. THE NEW MASSES fights for your rights, whether you be a professional, a white-collar worker, a laborer, a writer, an artist or a housewife. The contest—1st prize $1,000; 2nd, $250; 50 of $5 each—is our way of increasing THE NEW MASSES circulation. All you have to do to enter is to send in three titles that you think best fit the three cartoons on this page together with a $1-10-weeks' subscription to THE NEW MASSES. If you already are a subscriber and wish to enter the contest you may extend your own subscription for ten weeks or have the magazine sent to a friend of yours.

—RULES—

1. Anyone (except employees of the New Masses or their families) is eligible to enter the title contest.

2. The contest opened January 23. Titles must be received at the New Masses Contest Dept., Box 76, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y., on or before April 15, 1936. Awards will be made as soon after the end of the contest as the titles can be considered by the judges.

3. You need not use the attached coupon, although it is most convenient, but in order to be eligible in the Title Contest, your subscription for 10 weeks for the New Masses with $1, the subscription price, must accompany the titles you submit.

4. In case of a tie of two or more, then the judges will ask for a competitive twenty-five word descriptive essay on the three cartoons. Their decision on the essays will be final.

5. The title winners, by acceptance of the prizes, unconditionally transfer to the New Masses all rights to the winning titles.

6. The judges will award the prizes on the basis of the best set of titles submitted. Their decision will be final. No additional cartoons will be printed in the contest. All you need to enter is right here.

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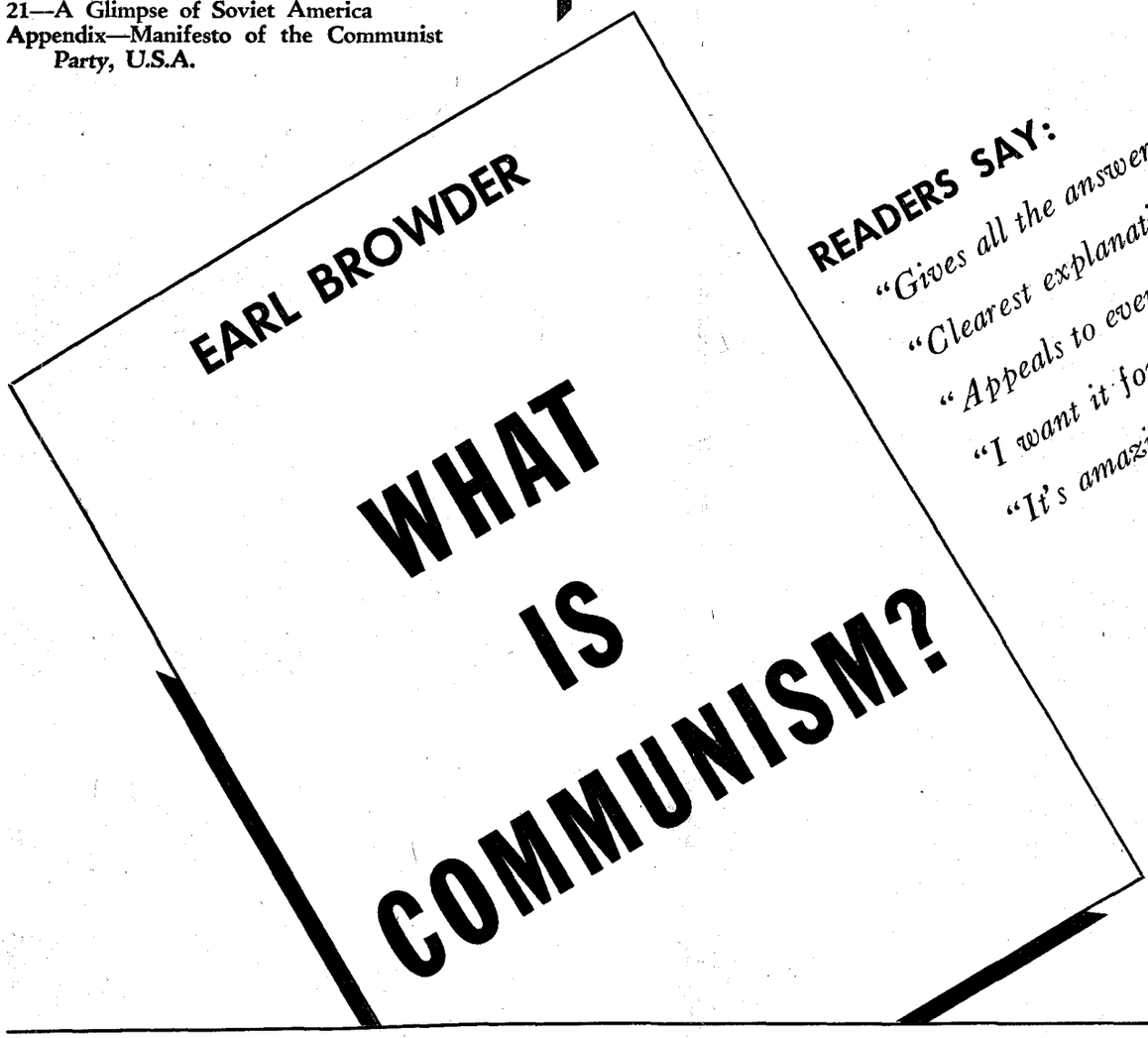

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